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MOTOR STORIES

THRILLING
ADVENTURE

MOTOR
FICTION

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CENTS

MOTOR MATT'S
PERIL

OR CASTAWAY IN
THE BAHAMAS

By STANLEY R. MATTHEWS

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MOTOR STORIES THRILLING ADVENTURE MOTOR FICTION

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MOTOR MATT'S PERIL

OR,

Cast Away in the Bahamas.

By the author of "MOTOR MATT."

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CHARACTERS THAT APPEAR IN THIS STORY.

Matt King, concerning whom there has always been a mystery—a lad of splendid athletic abilities, and never-failing nerve, who has won for himself, among the boys of the Western town, the popular name of "Mile-a-minute Matt."

Carl Pretzel, a cheerful and rollicking German lad, who is led by a fortunate accident to hook up with Motor Matt in double harness.

Dick Ferral, a Canadian boy who has served his time in the King's navy, and bobs up in the States where he falls into plots and counterplots, and comes near losing his life.

Archibald Townsend, otherwise "Captain Nemo, Jr.," of the submarine boat *Grampus*, who proves himself a firm friend of Motor Matt.

Lattimer Jurgens, an unscrupulous person who, for some time, has been at daggers drawn with Archibald Townsend.

Whistler, an able lieutenant of Lat Jurgens.

Cassidy, Burke and Harris, comprising the crew of the *Grampus*.

"**The Man from Cape Town**," who does not appear in the story but whose influence is nevertheless made manifest.

McMillan and Holcomb, police officers.

CHAPTER I.

CARL AS BUTTINSKY.

"Py shinks, aber dot's funny! Dose fellers look like dey vas birates, or some odder scalawags. Vat vas dey doing, anyvays, in a blace like dis?"

It was on the beach at Atlantic City, New Jersey. Carl Pretzel was there, in a bathing suit.

Those who know the Dutch boy will remember that he was fat, and there is always something humorous about a fat person in a bathing suit.

Carl had been in the water. After swimming out as far as the end of the steel pier, he had returned and climbed up on the beach. An Italian happened to be passing with a pushcart loaded with "red-hots" and buns. Carl had a dime pinned in the breast of his abbreviated costume. He unpinned the dime, bought two "red-hots" and a bun, and fell down in the sand to rest and enjoy himself. The Italian lingered near him, staring with bulging eyes to a place on the beach a little way beyond Carl. The Dutch boy, observing the trend of the Italian's curiosity, looked in the same direction.

A girl was kneeling on the beach, tossing her arms despairingly. She was a pretty girl, her clothes were torn and wet, and her long, dark hair was streaming about her shoulders.

Certainly it was a curious sight, there in that densely populated summer resort, to see a young woman acting in that manner. Up on the board walk above the beach a gaping throng had gathered. A little way from the board walk a man seemed to be doing something with a photograph instrument.

Carl, intensely wrought up, floundered to his bare feet, a "red-hot" in one hand and half a bun in the other. Any one in distress always appealed to Carl—particularly a woman.

From the woman, Carl's eyes drifted toward the water. A boat was pulling in, and was close to the shore. There were three men in the boat, two at the oars and one standing in the bow. They were a fierce-looking lot, those men. All were of swarthy hue, had fierce black mustaches, gold rings in their ears, heads covered with knotted handkerchiefs over which were drawn stocking caps, and all wore sashes through which were thrust long, ancient-looking knives and pistols.

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The man in the bow, whom Carl could see almost entirely, had on a pair of "galligaskins," or short, wide trousers, and immense jack boots.

The ruffians in the boat, no less than the girl on the beach, seemed to be deaf and dumb. Not a word was said by any of them, but their faces twitched in response to their varying emotions, and they used their hands in ceaseless gestures.

Carl was right in thinking that the men in the boat had the appearance of pirates; and the scene was "funny," inasmuch as it showed the sea rovers of a past age against a twentieth century background.

"Py shinks," muttered Carl, his temper slowly rising, "I don'd like dot! Der poor girl iss at der mercy oof dem birate fellers, und der bolice, und nopody else, seems villing to lendt her a handt. Vell, I dell you somet'ing, oof dose birate fellers in der poat douch a hair oof dot girl's headt, den dey vill hear from me! I vish Modor Matt und Tick vas here. Mit dem to helup, ve could clean out der whole gang. Anyhow, I do vat I can py meinseluf."

When the boat was in the surf, the two who were rowing dropped their oars and sprang overboard. Laying hold of the boat, they dragged it up on the strand. The man in the bow jumped out, and all three made a rush for the girl.

"Leaf dot laty alone!" bellowed Carl, starting for the girl about the same time the three men did. "You t'ink dis vas some tesert islants dot you can act like dot! Bolice! bolice!"

The sight of Carl, in his little red bathing suit, streaking along the sand, brought roars of laughter from those on the board walk. The merriment puzzled Carl; and angered him still further, too, to think that such a raft of people would give way to mirth when a young woman was in such terrible danger.

"Get away from there!" shouted a man near the photographic instrument.

"Meppy you see me gedding away," roared Carl as he ran, "aber I don'd t'ink. You vas a goward, und eferypody else vas a goward! I safe der girl meinseluf!"

"You'll spoil the picture!" howled one of the pirates; "get out of the picture!"

"I vill shpoil your face!" retorted Carl, failing to comprehend. "Ged oudt oof der picture yourseluf! Der laty iss nod to be hurted."

Carl reached the lady first. She seemed astounded and angry.

"Nefer fear, leedle vone," carolled the Dutch boy, planting himself between the girl and her supposed enemies, "dose vicked mens vill haf to valk ofer me pefore dey ged ad you! Yah, so helup me! Run for der poard valk vile I mix it mit dem und gif you der shance."

"Go 'way!" screamed the girl; "mind your own business, if you've got any!"

"Oh, you Dutch idiot!" raved one of the buccaneers, striking at Carl with a cutlass. "You've spoiled our work!"

The other two pirates were jumping up and down and saying things about Carl that were far from complimentary.

The Dutch boy tried to dodge the cutlass, but failed. It struck him squarely across the throat, and, had it been a thing of steel, would have separated his head from the rest of his body. But the cutlass was made of lath, covered with tinfoil, and broke as it fell.

"He's ruined the films!" howled the man at the photograph instrument.

"Sic him, Tige!" cried another, who was standing beside him.

A brindle bulldog, which Carl had not seen until that moment, gave a yip and started for the scene of the trouble.

"Vat's der madder, anyvays?" demanded Carl, convinced by the young lady's manner that she did not want to be rescued.

"Moving pictures, you Dutch idiot!" yelled the leader of the pirates. "If you'd had any sense you'd have known that without being told. Now we've got to do it all over again! Take him, Tige!"

The bulldog was hurling himself across the sand like a thunderbolt, and he was making straight for Carl. Neither the girl nor the pirates showed any inclination to stop the dog; on the contrary, they appeared to derive considerable satisfaction from the prospect of his getting close enough to use his teeth on the Dutch boy.

Carl was perfectly willing to face any number of pirates in order to rescue a beautiful maiden in distress, but he drew the line at coming company front with a vicious bulldog. When a person wears nothing but a bathing suit his means of offense and defense are naturally limited.

Since Carl could not help the girl, he made up his mind to do what he could to help himself. Whirling about, he laid himself out in the direction of the steel pier, the bulldog in hot pursuit and gaining on him at every jump.

Everybody, except the moving-picture people, was laughing. And excepting Carl. There was nothing especially amusing in the situation for him.

The Italian with the pushcart was haw-hawing and holding his sides. A boy, using his legs to get away from a dog, was something he could understand, and it pleased him.

Carl did not have time to go around the cart, so he ducked under it. The dog ducked after him. Carl had seen how the Italian was enjoying himself, and he resented it. By rising up under the cart Carl could overturn it, thus dropping a lot of buns and "red-hots" on the dog and possibly stopping the pursuit. Carl did not stop to debate the matter—he hadn't time—but rose up, thus sending the cart over upon the dog.

The Italian had been cooking the "red-hots" on a steel plate. The plate, of course, was hot, and it struck the dog. There came a yelp of pain, and the dog tore out from under the cart and hustled back toward the photograph instrument.

The Italian had changed his tune. He was not laughing, now, but was prancing around and howling frantically for the police.

"Sacre diavolo estrito crystal!" he shrieked. "You wreck-a da wag!—you spoil-a da bun, da red-a-hot! Polees! Me, I like-a keel-a you! Polees! polees!"

While he yelled, he started angrily toward Carl. The Dutch boy, whirling the overturned cart around, caused the Italian to stumble over it. Leaving him to writhe and sputter among the scattered buns and "wienes," Carl raced on toward the steel pier.

He was flattering himself that he would be able to regain the bathhouse without further molestation, but in this he was mistaken. An officer jumped down from the side of the pier, as he came close to it, and grabbed him by the arm.

"Not so fast, there!" cried the policeman.

"Vat's der madder mit you?" wheezed Carl. "I don'd vas doing anyt'ing."

"Oh, no," was the sarcastic response, "you wasn't doing a thing! What did you kick over that dago's cart for?"

"Dose fellers hat set a dog on me!" cried Carl. "Ditn't you see der dog?"

Just then the Italian, two of the pirates and one of the men with the photographic apparatus, hurried up, all in a crowd.

"Pinch-a heem!" fumed the Italian; "he make-a plenty da troub'!"

"He's the original Buttinsky," scowled the picture man. "He pushed into that moving picture, spoiled a lot of film and made it necessary for us to do our work all over."

"He's the prize idiot, all right!" clamored one of the pirates.

"What's the matter, here?" demanded a voice, as a youth pushed into the crowd and ranged himself at the Dutch boy's side. "What's the matter, Carl?"

"Modor Matt!" exclaimed Carl, gripping the newcomer's arm. "You haf arrifed py der nick oof time, like always! Now, den," and here Carl faced the others belligerently, "my bard has come, und you vill haf to make some oxblanadions. Vat haf you got to say for yourselufs?"

CHAPTER II.

THE MOVING-PICTURE MAN MAKES A QUEER MOVE.

A little farther along the beach, and well out of the way of high tide, four heavy posts had been planted in the sand. This was the mooring-place for the "Hawk," the famous air ship belonging to Matt and Dick Ferral, and which the three chums had brought from South Chicago.

The boys had had the Hawk in Atlantic City for two weeks, making four flights every day except on Sunday, or on days when high winds or stormy weather prevailed. There had been only one stormy day when it had been found necessary to house the Hawk under the roof of one of the piers, and only one other day when the wind had been so strong as to make an ascent too risky.

Four passengers were carried aloft in each flight. Six persons were all Matt thought advisable to take up in the air ship, and of course he had to go along to take charge of the motor, and with him went either Dick or Carl to act as lookout and "crew." A charge of \$25 was made for each passenger, and the flights had so captured the fancy of wealthy resorters that the boys had advance "bookings" that promised to keep them in Atlantic City all the summer. With \$400 a day coming in, and a very small outgo for expenses, the chums were making money hand over fist.

On the afternoon when Carl was taking his dip in the ocean, and incidentally spoiling films for the moving-picture people, Matt and Dick, with their usual four passengers, had been making their last flight of the day over Absecon Island and the eastern coast of New Jersey.

One of the passengers on that trip was a Mr. Archibald Townsend, of Philadelphia. Passengers always showed a great interest in the air ship, but Mr. Townsend had shown more curiosity and had asked more questions than any of the others.

As Matt and Dick were bringing the Hawk down to the beach, they had witnessed the overturning of the Italian's "red-hot" outfit, and had seen Carl get clear of the wreck and race on toward the steel pier. Leaving Dick to make the air ship secure in her berth, Matt had tumbled out of the car and hurried after Carl. As we have already seen, the young motorist reached his Dutch chum just as the officer had laid hold of him.

The officer's name was McMillan, and he was arrogant and officious to a degree. He had been on duty along that part of the board walk ever since the chums had reached Atlantic City, and he had interfered with their operations to such an extent that Matt had found it necessary, on one occasion, to report him. On this account, McMillan was not very amiably disposed toward the young motorist and his friends.

"I don't care who this fellow is," growled the officer, nodding his head toward Carl, "no one can come here an' raise hob on the beach without bein' jugged for it. I saw what happened. The Dutchman knocked over the dago's cart."

"Dot feller," and here Carl pointed to the moving-picture man, "set der dog on me. Oof I hatn't knocked ofer der cart, der dog would haf got me sure. Vat pitzness he got setting der dog on me, hey? He iss to plame, yah, dot's righdt."

"What did you want to butt into our picture for?" demanded the photographer.

"How I know you vas daking some mooting bictures?" demanded Carl. "I see dot young laty on der peach, und she vas in some greadt drouples; den I see dem birate fellers in der poat, going afder her, und nopody would run mit demselufs to der resgue. Den I go. You bed my life, no laty vat iss in tisdress can be dot vay ven I vas aroundt."

"We'll have to do our work all over again to-morrow afternoon," went on the moving-picture man, "and I have to pay these actors more money for another afternoon's work."

"How much will that be?" asked Matt, who saw very clearly that Carl had made a mistake and was in the wrong.

"There are six of 'em," replied the photographer, "and I pay them ten dollars apiece."

"That makes sixty dollars," said Matt, "and I'll—"

"Just a minute, King." It was Mr. Townsend who spoke. He had hurried toward the scene of the

dispute and had arrived in time to hear the moving-picture man's explanation and Matt's offer to foot the bill. "This fellow's name is Jurgens," continued Mr. Townsend. "He comes from Philadelphia, and I happen to know that he gives these actors five dollars apiece for their work. If you give him just half of what he asks, King, you will be treating him fairly."

Jurgens glared at Townsend.

"What business have you got interfering here?" he asked, angrily.

"I am merely interfering in the interests of justice, that's all," replied Townsend, coolly, "and because I think you an all-around scoundrel, Jurgens. You and I have had some dealings already, you remember."

A black scowl crossed Jurgens' face.

"And our dealings are not finished yet, by a long shot," returned Jurgens.

Townsend tossed his hands contemptuously and turned his back on the photographer.

"I'll have my sixty dollars," cried Jurgens, to Matt, "or there'll be trouble."

"You'll take thirty," said Matt, taking some money from his pocket and offering it, "and not a cent more."

Jurgens struck aside the hand fiercely.

"This dago is the boy that interests me," said the officer. "He's a poor man an' can't afford to have his stock in trade ruined by that Dutch lobster."

At this, Carl fired up.

"Who you vas galling a Dutch lopsder?" he demanded, moving truculently in the direction of McMillan.

"You!" snorted the officer, dropping a hand on his club.

Carl let fly with his fist. Matt grabbed the arm just in time to counter the blow.

"That's your game is it?" growled McMillan, jerking the club from his belt. "I'll take care of you, my buck! Come along to the station with me!"

"Wait a minute, officer," said Matt. "Stop making a fool of yourself, Carl," he added to his Dutch chum. "You made a mistake at the start-off, but that was no reason Jurgens should have set the dog on you. As for the Italian," and here Matt faced the officer again, "I'll pay him for the damage he has suffered."

"Fifty cents will probably settle that," laughed Townsend, "so if you throw him a five, King, he will be glad the accident happened."

One of the bank notes Jurgens had refused Matt now gave the Italian. His grieved look at once faded into an expansive grin, and he grabbed the money, thanked Matt in explosive Italian and ran back toward his overturned cart.

"That lets the dago out," said the officer, grimly, "but it don't let the Dutchman out, not by a jugful. He'll get a fine, and if Jurgens here wants to prefer charges——"

"I do," snapped Jurgens. "If I don't get that sixty dollars I'll make it hot for all these balloonists. That's the kind of a duck I am."

"I know what kind of a duck you are, Jurgens," said Townsend, sternly, "and if you know when you're well off, you'll leave Motor Matt and his friends alone."

"Sixty dollars," cried Jurgens, hotly, "and this gang can take it or leave it."

"You go with me," declared McMillan, twisting his left hand in the collar of Carl's bathing suit.

"Nonsense, officer!" said Townsend. "You're making a mountain out of a molehill. Let the boy alone."

"I know my business," snarled the officer, "an' I don't have to have strangers blow in here an' tell me what to do."

He took a step toward the board walk, jerking Carl along after him.

"I'm not a stranger in Atlantic City, officer," went on Townsend. "In fact, I'm very well acquainted with the chief of police here. Just a second until I show you my card."

The potent name of the chief brought McMillan to a halt. He had been reported once, and if a man who had influence reported him again, there might be a vacancy in the force.

"All I want is to do what's right," he mumbled.

Townsend had reached into his pocket and drawn out a handful of papers. While he was going over them, looking for his professional card, Jurgens made a lightning-like move. It was a most peculiar move and, for a moment, took everybody by surprise.

Throwing himself forward, Jurgens snatched a long, folded paper from among those Townsend held in his hands. Quick as a wink Jurgens whirled, dashed for the steps leading up to the board walk and was away like a deer.

"Stop him, officer!" shouted Townsend. "That's the kind of a man he is! Stop him!"

McMillan now saw that a real emergency confronted him. Releasing Carl, he rushed away on the

trail of the thieving Jurgens.

Motor Matt, however, had kept his wits, and he was halfway to the steps before the officer had started.

When the young motorist bounded to the board walk, Jurgens was tearing through the crowd.

"Stop, thief! Stop, thief!" yelled Matt.

There were so many people thronging that part of the board walk that it seemed an easy enough matter to halt the rascally photographer. Yet, strange as it may seem, this was not the case. Men, who were escorting ladies and children, made haste to get them out of the way; others, who had no one depending on them, seemed bewildered, and pushed out of the way to watch. Fortunately, another officer appeared on the other side of the entrance to the pier and headed Jurgens off in that direction.

Turning to the left, Jurgens struck the ticket taker out of his path and raced onto the pier.

Matt followed, not more than a dozen feet behind.

The concert was over and, at that moment, there were not many people on the pier, and Matt had a straight-away chase through the little pavilions.

He felt sure that he would capture Jurgens, for when the thief reached the end of the pier, the Atlantic Ocean would cut short his flight and he would have to turn back.

But in this Matt was mistaken. Jurgens did not run to the end of the pier but climbed over the rail at the side and dropped from sight. When Matt reached the rail, he saw that Jurgens had dropped into a rowboat, that had been tied to the piles, and was bending to the oars. He shouted a taunting defiance at Matt as he continued to put a widening stretch of water between them.

At once Matt thought of the Hawk. In less than five minutes he and Ferral could be in the air, following the rowboat wherever it went. With the officers to watch the shore and perhaps pursue Jurgens in other boats, Matt felt positive that he and Dick would be able to overhaul Jurgens if other means failed.

Without loss of a moment, he started back toward the board walk.

CHAPTER III.

WARM WORK AT THE "INLET."

Some one of the three boys was always on watch near the air ship whenever she was moored. This duty, during the excitement Carl had kicked up on the beach, had fallen to Dick Ferral.

Dick had made the ropes fast and was sitting in the sand near the car, wondering what all the commotion was about. There was usually a crowd of curious people around the Hawk, or staring down at her from the board walk, but now the counter-attraction at the pier had drawn them away, and that part of the beach was deserted.

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Dick had seen Matt rush up the steps to the board walk, but the crowd was so thick he had not been able to observe his rush out on the pier. The rowboat, however, had not escaped his attention, and he had watched it pull away from the steel pier and move off toward the Heinz pier. Thereupon officers began running along the beach. McMillan kept abreast of the rowboat on the shore, and another man ran toward the Heinz pier, with the evident intention of catching the man in the boat if he tried to land there.

Presently Matt came dashing up, and Dick sprang to his feet. He could tell by his chum's manner that he was some way involved in the excitement.

"What's going on, mate?" asked Dick.

"Cast off the ropes, Dick!" called Matt, leaping to the cable nearest him. "We've got to overhaul that man in the boat, and capture him—if we can."

"What's he been doing?"

As he put the question Dick was working at one of the other cables.

"I'll tell you when we're in the air, Dick," rejoined Matt. "Carl butted into a moving picture, and a whole lot of trouble has come from it."

While Dick was casting off the last rope and heaving it aboard, Matt jumped into the car and got the motor going. By the time Dick was in the car with him, Matt switched the power into the propeller, tilted the steering rudder so as to carry the Hawk upward and seaward, and they were off.

"Keep your eye on the boat, Dick," called Matt, "and let me know just where she is all the time."

"Just now, matey," Dick answered, from the lookout station forward, "the boat's doubling the end of the Heinz pier."

"The rascal will not land there. He knows the police will be waiting for him. I don't see how it's possible for him to get away, with the whole shore line patrolled."

"What's he done? Keelhaul me if I haven't been trying to guess that for the last ten minutes."

"As I told you, Carl got into a moving picture. Some men were taking a picture on the beach, and Carl, seeing a young woman—as he thought—in distress, tried to save her from pirates. The gang set a dog on him, and in getting away from the dog, our pard upset a dago's pushcart. An officer had Carl, when I got over close to the pier, and the picture people and the dago were making it hot for him. I guess they'd have jailed Carl if it hadn't been for Mr. Townsend——"

"The Townsend we had with us on the last trip?"

"Yes. Townsend knew the picture man, and from the way he talked I guess he don't know much good of him. Anyhow, while Townsend was looking through some documents he had taken from his pocket, the picture man—Jurgens by name—grabbed a paper and made off with it. Great spark plugs! I never saw a more brazen piece of work. I chased Jurgens out on the steel pier, but he got away from me by taking to a rowboat that was moored there."

Ferral laughed. The idea of Carl mistaking what was going on and trying to save a girl from pirates, there in that fashionable resort, was too much for him. Temporarily he lost sight of the graver aspects of the affair. Even Matt grinned at the spectacle the Dutch boy, in his bathing suit, must have made, battling with pirates to save a girl who did not want to be saved.

"This thing has got a mighty serious side to it, Dick," said Matt, suddenly sobering. "I haven't the least notion what that paper was that Jurgens grabbed, but it must have been an important document. And Townsend lost it while trying to help Carl and me. That puts it up to us, Dick, to help him get it back."

"Right-o!" returned Ferral. "There's a boat putting off from the Heinz pier. McMillan's in it and two men are breaking their backs at the oars. They'll get this Jurgens swab, if I'm any prophet. They're going about two fathoms to Jurgens' one."

"How's Jurgens heading?"

"For the open sea. He's struck rough water just over the bar from the Inlet, and his boat's on end about half the time. If one of those combers hits him broadside on, he'll go to the sharks, paper and all."

"What's his notion for heading out into the ocean, I wonder?"

"Strike me lucky!" exclaimed Ferral. "Why, he's making for a sailboat, and the craft is laying to to take him aboard."

"What's the name of the boat? Can you make it out?"

The sun was down and shadows were settling over the water. Enough light remained, though, for the sharp eyes of Ferral to read the name on the sailboat's stern.

"She's the *Crescent*," he announced, "and one of the boats that berth in the Inlet. There! Listen to that!"

The crack of a revolver echoed up to Matt and Carl above the surge of the breakers.

"Who's doing the shooting, Dick?" asked Matt.

"McMillan. He sent a bullet across the *Crescent's* bows. That's an order for her to keep lying to until McMillan can come aboard. They're just taking Jurgens out of the boat and making the boat's painter fast. Ah!" There was excitement in Ferral's voice as he went on. "The skipper of the *Crescent* isn't obeying orders, but is going on out to sea. I'll bet McMillan is as mad as a cannibal. There he goes, blazing away at the *Crescent*—but he might as well throw his bullets into the air."

"The *Crescent* will be called to account for that!" exclaimed Matt.

"McMillan is pulling back to the pier," proceeded Dick, watching below. "What are we to do now, matey? We'd have had considerable trouble taking Jurgens off the rowboat, and it's a cinch we can't get him off that other craft."

"We'll follow the *Crescent* for a while," said the young motorist, "and see where she goes. Possibly she'll try to land Jurgens at some point on the mainland. If she does, we'll drop down there and do what we can to capture him."

For more than an hour the *Crescent* steered straight out into the ocean, the Hawk hovering above her. The sailboat was not putting out any lights, and the growing darkness rendered it impossible for Matt or Dick to see any one aboard her. They could hear voices, however, for sounds on the earth's surface are always wonderfully distinct to people in balloons or other air craft.

At the end of an hour and a half the *Crescent* put about. The Hawk followed the sailboat as far as the channel leading through the bar at the entrance to the Inlet. Having made sure that the sailboat would return to her usual berth, the boys headed their air ship for the beach.

"I guess McMillan will be on the lookout for the *Crescent*, Dick," said Matt, "but we ought to make sure that Jurgens don't get away. I believe I'll get out of the Hawk, close to the Inlet, and leave you to take the air ship back to her moorings."

"I can do that all right, messmate," answered Dick.

There was plenty of room for landing, and when the Hawk had been brought within a couple of feet of the ground Matt dropped over the rail and Ferral took his seat among the levers.

As Matt hurried to the board walk, and on to the wharf at the Inlet, he looked around him for some officer whom he could pick up and take along with him. There was no officer in sight,

however.

It was the dinner hour at the big hotels, and promenaders had nearly all deserted the ocean front. A dozen or more sailboats were heaving to the swell and knocking against the wharf at the Inlet, but only a few of the men belonging with them were on the wharf itself.

"Can you tell me where the *Crescent* is?" Matt asked of a man leaning against an electric-light pole.

"Jest seen 'er standin' in," was the reply. "She ought to be at the end of the wharf by this time."

"Is that where she lies when she's tied up?"

"Yes."

Thinking that surely he would find McMillan, or some other officer, at the end of the wharf, ready to deal with Jurgens the moment he tried to come ashore, Matt hurried on.

The *Crescent* had just warped into her berth. A man on the wharf was making her cable fast. Under the electric light Matt could see a group of three or four men in the cockpit of the little sailing craft. At about the same moment, a figure lurched forward from behind a barrel that stood on the wharf. The gleam of a star on the coat informed Matt that the man was an officer.

"Hello, there!" the young motorist called to the group in the cockpit. "Where's that man you picked up off the Heinz pier?"

Two of the men climbed to the side of the *Crescent* and jumped to the wharf planks. Neither of them was Jurgens.

"You've got us guessin', friend," said one of the men.

"Not much I haven't," answered Matt, stoutly. "I was one of those in the air ship and I saw you pick up Jurgens."

"You've got him, all right," put in the officer. "He's a thief, and I'm here to arrest him. The *Crescent* is liable to get herself into hot water by this afternoon's work."

The officer was not McMillan. While he spoke, he started for the edge of the wharf with the apparent intention of getting into the sailboat and making a search.

"Hold up a minute, officer," called the man from the *Crescent*, pulling off his coat.

The officer halted, and turned. At that instant, Matt saw the fellow who had been making the boat's cables fast to the posts, creeping toward the officer from behind.

"Look out, there!" he yelled. "One of those men is after you from the rear! They're trying to——"

Matt's words were cut short. While he was speaking, the man from the *Crescent* had whirled suddenly and thrown the coat over his head.

Matt had a fleeting glimpse of the officer, crumpling to the wharf under a vicious blow from behind, and then his own head was encompassed in the smothering folds of the coat and he was thrown struggling to the planks.

CHAPTER IV.

PRISONERS ON A SUBMARINE.

Motor Matt fought in vain to free himself. At least two men had laid hold of him, and the coat was kept drawn tightly over his face and head to prevent outcry. In this condition he was picked up, carried some distance along the wharf and finally laid down on his face while his hands were lashed at his back and his feet tied. Then, perfectly helpless and unable to see where he was being taken, he felt himself lifted and lowered. After a moment he was lifted and lowered again, this time, as he surmised, through a narrow hatch, for he felt the sides of the aperture striking his arms and shoulders as he went down.

Presently he landed on a hard deck, and was again carried a short distance. Here, when he was finally laid down, the coat was whisked from his face and he found himself in the blinding glare of an electric light.

Retreating footsteps came to him, followed by the slamming of a door.

As soon as his eyes had become used to the glow of the light, he discovered that he was in a small room with a curved iron deck overhead. An incandescent lamp was screwed into one of the walls, and there was a door in each bulkhead at the ends of the room.

Matt was bewildered by what had recently happened to him.

Had the crew of the *Crescent* resorted to violence in order to save Jurgens from capture? The law would take hold of the men good and hard for resisting an officer.

As Matt figured it, he had been brought aboard the sailboat. But what would his captors have to gain by a move of that kind? McMillan knew what the men on the *Crescent* had done for Jurgens, and it was a fair inference that the officer would soon pay the craft a visit, himself.

What put Matt in a quandary, however, was the fact that he could not reconcile his present

surroundings with the *Crescent*. He was in an armor-plated room, and the sailboat was a small wooden vessel, and was hardly fitted with such a cabin as that to which the prisoner had been taken.

While Matt was wondering about this, a door in one of the bulkheads opened and another prisoner was carried in by two men and laid down beside him. This second captive likewise had his head smothered in a coat, but the blue uniform told Matt plainly he was the policeman. The officer was bound, just as Matt was, and as soon as he was laid down the coat was jerked away and the two who had brought him into the room started out.

"Wait!" called Matt, his voice ringing strangely between the steel walls. "What do you mean by making prisoners of us, like this?"

One of the men looked around and laughed grimly, but he made no other reply. The next moment the door had closed, and Matt and the officer were alone together. [Pg 7]

"Here's a pretty how-de-do," fumed the officer. "These villains are goin' a good ways in their attempt to help that thief, Jurgens! Somebody'll smart for all this."

"Those men on the *Crescent* are foolish," said Matt. "It won't be long before McMillan gets us out of here."

"I don't know about that," was the answer. "Mebby it won't be so easy as you think for McMillan to get us away from these scoundrels."

"Where is McMillan? Do you know?"

"He was on the wharf with me, just before the *Crescent* got in. He thought him and me wasn't enough to get Jurgens off the boat, and so he went after another officer. You're Motor Matt, who's been making ascensions in that air ship—I've seen you a good many times on the beach. My name's Holcomb."

"Where do you think we are, Holcomb?" Matt asked. "It can't be we're on the *Crescent*."

"Sure not. Looks to me as though we had been brought aboard Captain Nemo, Jr.'s boat, the *Grampus*. She bobbed up at the Inlet wharf yesterday. I'm on night duty at the Inlet, and I seen her last night."

"The *Grampus*?" echoed Matt. "She must be an ironclad."

"She's more'n that, Motor Matt. She's a submarine."

"A submarine! I haven't heard of such a boat being in Atlantic City."

"It ain't gen'rally known, I guess. Captain Nemo, Jr., is a queer sort of a fish, and he's invented a boat that he claims is a little better than any other under-water boat that was ever built. I talked with him on the wharf, last night. Who the cap'n is, nobody knows, and he hides himself under the name of Nemo, Jr. He talked straight enough, and fair enough, and allowed he was keeping quiet so as not to let reporters and other curious people bother him while he was in Atlantic City. It was your air ship that caused him to come here."

"The air ship?" queried Matt, more and more mystified.

"That's what he told me. Everything in the line of inventions, he says, interests him, especially if the inventions have anything to do with gasoline motors. This boat is run by a motor of that kind. Nemo, Jr., said he was goin' to take a fly with you to-day."

"I guess he didn't, then. No man by that name went up with us. But the point that's bothering me is, Holcomb, why were we brought here?"

"To save Jurgens, the movin'-picture man."

"How'll that save him?"

At that point the explosions of an engine getting to work echoed sharply through the steel hull of the *Grampus*. The whole fabric began to quiver, and muffled, indistinct voices could be heard. Immediately there was a perceptible downward movement.

"We're sinking!" exclaimed Matt.

"Looks like the scoundrels was takin' us to the bottom," said Holcomb grimly. "More'n likely McMillan has shown up with some more men and is makin' things lively for those on the wharf. The fellows that grabbed us are takin' us below the surface so the officers can't get at us, or Jurgens! Gadhook it all! Captain Nemo, Jr., didn't seem like a man who'd help out any underhand game like this. I reckon we're in for it, Matt. I ain't got any fears but that we'll come out all right in the end, but the outlook is a long ways from bein' pleasant. If Nemo, Jr., is tryin'— There! I reckon we've hit bottom."

Holcomb broke off his remarks abruptly. The downward motion of the *Grampus* had ceased with a slight jar. Before the two prisoners could talk further, one of the doors opened and Jurgens came into the room. He was followed by the man who had climbed out of the *Crescent* and had faced Matt on the wharf.

Closing the door behind them, the two men stood looking grimly down on Matt and the officer.

"I don't understand what your game is," cried Holcomb, angrily, "but if you know when you're well off, you'll set us at liberty, and be quick about it."

"You'll get your liberty, all right," said Jurgens. "Now that I've got hold of what I wanted, I'll not

be long pulling out of Atlantic City. The moving-picture business can go hang for all of me! I've got a fortune in prospect, and I'll nail it here and now if it's the last thing I ever do."

"What do you mean by treating me like this?" demanded Matt; "what have I got to do with your plans?"

"You and the officer could have upset 'em mighty easy if we hadn't bowled you over and got you out of the way before the rest of those policemen got here."

"Is Captain Nemo, Jr., helping you in this game you're playing?" queried Holcomb.

"Helping me?" Jurgens turned to his companion from the *Crescent* with a husky, ill-omened laugh. "That's pretty good, eh, Whistler?"

"The best ever," answered Whistler, echoing the laugh.

"Townsend has helped me to the extent of furnishin' something I'd about given up laying my hands on," went on Jurgens, again turning his eyes on Matt and the officer. "I want you two to tell him that I'm off for the Bahamas, and that he'll have to get up in the morning if he beats Lat Jurgens."

"Townsend?" queried Matt.

"Yes," scowled the other, "Townsend. That's the name he uses when he's ashore. When he's afloat, he's Captain Nemo, Jr."

Matt was astounded.

"Have you stolen this submarine, Jurgens," he asked, "as well as that paper that——"

"You know all you're goin' to," interrupted Jurgens. Turning to Whistler he added: "Cut the boy loose and make him strip. It's time we got rid of him and the policeman and cleared out of here. We're a fathom under water, but Townsend may think of some way to get at us if we stay here too long."

Whistler bent over Matt and removed the ropes.

"You're going to put us ashore?" asked Matt, getting to his feet and stretching his benumbed limbs.

"We're goin' to send you to the surface, and you'll have to attend to gettin' ashore yourselves. Can you swim?"

Matt nodded.

"I can't," said Holcomb.

"Well," went on Jurgens, "I don't want to drown you, but the *Grampus* can't go to the surface just to let you off. You say you can swim," and he turned to Matt. "You'll come up not far from the wharf, and ten to one you'll find quite a lot of people on the wharf. As soon as they pull you in, you tell them to get out a small boat and lay to in her half a fathom off the end of the pier. That's where the officer will come up, and you can fish him in out of the wet. Now, strip."

"Why am I to do that?" demanded Matt.

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"Because you'll be able to swim easier with your clothes off."

"I'll not take them off. If we're still alongside the wharf, I can make it without removing my clothes. How are you going to send me to the surface?"

"Come on and I'll show you. Drop in behind him, Whistler, and hold a gun ready in case he tries any foolishness."

Jurgens turned and opened the door through which he and his companion had just come. Matt followed him through the door, Whistler bringing up the rear with a drawn weapon.

Matt was bewildered by the trend of recent events. The quickest way for getting at the nub of the difficulty was by finding Townsend, otherwise Captain Nemo, Jr., and hearing what he had to say.

But how was Matt to be sent to the surface?

That was the point which, just then, was causing him the most wonder.

CHAPTER V.

THROUGH THE TORPEDO TUBE.

Motor Matt was conducted along a narrow steel corridor. Two or three ruffianly looking men were passed. They were all in greasy overclothes and paid the prisoners little attention. A door finally admitted Matt and the two with him into a chamber in the very bow of the boat. Here there were a couple of torpedo tubes, although, so far as Matt could see, there were no torpedoes.

"We'll put him out of the starboard tube," said Jurgens. "Close the bow port, Whistler, and blow the water out of the tube. I'll take the gun while you're busy."

Whistler handed over the revolver and pulled a lever at the side of the chamber. Matt could hear

a muffled sound as the port closed. Thereupon Whistler, by means of another lever, turned compressed air into the tube, and there came a stifled swishing sound as the water was ejected. Finally the sound ceased, and Whistler opened the breech door and stepped back.

The cavernous tube yawned blackly under Matt's eyes. He was a lad of grit and determination, but such an experience as he was about to pass through would have shaken even stronger nerves than his.

"Take me to the surface," said Matt, "and let me out of the submarine by way of the deck!"

"And mebbe get spotted and captured ourselves, eh?" answered Jurgens. "Not much! Here's the way you're going to get out if you get out at all."

"What did you bring Holcomb and me into the submarine for? Why didn't you leave us on the wharf?"

"It would have been too easy for you to tip us off to the other officers. We needed a little time to get the *Grampus* submerged. I don't care how much you tip us off now. We'll not come to the surface again until we're well off Cape May." Jurgens snapped his fingers. "That for Townsend!" he added, defiantly; "let him catch me if he can."

"You seem to know as much about submarines as you do about moving pictures," remarked Matt, caustically.

"I know a good deal about a lot of things, and I've found the knowledge mighty handy a lot of times. If you're ready, squeeze into the tube. We haven't much time to spare."

"But——"

"Get in, I tell you!" and Jurgens waved the revolver threateningly. "There's not much danger, but you'd better put your fingers over your ears in order to save your ear drums. The pressure of the air that shoots you out of the tube is rather heavy. But I'd advise you to take off your clothes."

Matt saw that it was useless to argue with Jurgens or Whistler. The two men had some desperate scheme at the back of their heads and they were not resorting to any halfway measures in carrying it out.

Pulling his cap well down on his head, Matt squeezed into the dark tube.

"Ready?" called Jurgens.

"Yes," answered Matt, almost stifled, pushing his hands against his ears.

"Take a long breath—we're going to close the breech door."

The young motorist breathed deeply, and the next moment there was a clang as the breech was closed.

Instantly there followed a grinding sound as the outer port was opened. The chilling water rushed in. For the space of a heart beat Matt felt the water submerging his cramped body and filling the full length of the tube. Two or three ticks of a watch would have told the duration of the experience, but to Matt it seemed like an eternity.

Then there came a shock that nearly made him unconscious. He thought he was being torn limb from limb by the rushing air. In a twinkling—so swiftly that he scarcely realized it—he was shot from the end of the tube and into the water.

He was a fraction of a second in getting control of his limbs; after that, he began kicking and using his hands to propel himself upward.

Half stunned he came to the surface, and the lights of the wharf swam in his watery eyes. He gasped for breath and then sent up a thrilling cry for help.

The difficulty of keeping himself afloat, with all his water-soaked clothing to hold him down, was a good deal greater than he had thought it would be.

To his great relief, above the roaring in his ears he heard sounds of running feet on the wharf, and excited voices shouting something he could not understand. There was a splash beside him. Instinctively he threw out his hands and grasped a rope.

"All right?" cried a voice from the wharf.

"Yes," he answered.

Then those on the wharf began pulling him in and soon had him, dripping and spent, on the planks.

"Where's Holcomb?"

Matt made out McMillan's face bending over him. The question caused the young motorist suddenly to remember that there was something yet to be done for Holcomb.

"Get out a boat," said Matt, "and lay to about a fathom off the end of the pier. Holcomb is coming up—and he can't swim."

"Coming up?" repeated McMillan, blankly.

"Yes; they're going to shoot him out of the torpedo tube, just as they did me."

"Great guns! Can they do that? It ain't possible that——"

"Don't stand there talking, McMillan," put in another voice. "Matt has told you what to do, so go

ahead and do it. The scoundrels can use the torpedo tube to get rid of Holcomb, and if Holcomb can't swim he'll be in plenty of danger. Find your boat and get her off the end of the pier. Lively, now!"

The speaker, as McMillan dashed away, came closer to Matt. It was Archibald Townsend.

"You've had a rough experience, my lad," said Townsend. "How do you feel?"

"A little dizzy," replied Matt.

He peered around him. They were alone under the electric light, all the others on the wharf having gone with McMillan to help in the rescue of Holcomb.

"I don't wonder," rejoined Townsend. "Being slammed through a torpedo tube isn't a very pleasant experience."

"Do you call yourself Captain Nemo, Jr., when you're afloat in the submarine, Mr. Townsend?" asked Matt.

"Jurgens has been talking with you, I see," went on Townsend. "Well, he's given it to you pretty straight, scoundrel though he is and with small regard for the truth. Yes, I'm Captain Nemo, Jr., of the submarine *Grampus*. And Jurgens has stolen my boat and captured two of my men! Losing the boat and that paper makes this a hard-luck story for me."

"Can't you get back the boat in some way?" queried Matt, his excitement growing as his brain cleared and strength returned to him.

"If Jurgens would bring the *Grampus* to the surface I might have some chance, but it's impossible if he keeps her below."

"She's lying right off the pier, just below the spot where she was moored."

"She might as well be a thousand miles away so far as my ability to recover her is concerned. My only hope just now is that the men working for me, who were captured when Jurgens stole the boat, may be able to turn on their captors and get the *Grampus* back in their hands."

"Jurgens told me to tell you that he was off for the Bahamas, and that you'll have to get up in the morning if you beat him."

A frown crossed Townsend's face.

"I knew very well that was where he was going," said the owner of the *Grampus*.

"Had the paper he took from you," queried Matt, "anything to do with his trip to the Bahamas?"

"Everything. I can hardly understand how the theft of that chart, and of the boat, happened to come in so pat for Jurgens. But I'm going to tell you more about the chart later, Matt. Just now you're as wet as a drowned rat and must want to get back to your hotel and put on some dry clothes."

"I want to make sure, before I leave the Inlet," returned Matt, "that McMillan and the others succeed in rescuing Holcomb."

"This way, then," said Townsend, starting along the wharf; "I'll go with you. After we see Holcomb landed, I'll go with you to the hotel and broach a subject that just popped into my mind."

On reaching the end of the pier it was evident to Matt and Townsend that Holcomb had just come to the surface. A sharp cry of command came from some one in the rowboat and the craft could be seen moving swiftly away toward the right.

Matt's keen eyes detected a black spot on the water, but before the boat could reach it the spot had disappeared.

"He's gone down!" gasped Matt. "If Jurgens' scheme has caused Holcomb to lose his life, the prospect will look pretty dark for him."

"Jurgens is bound to come to some bad end," declared Townsend. "I've known him for two or three years, and he has always been crafty and unscrupulous. But I don't think he'll ever hang for the drowning of Holcomb. If my eyes show the situation clearly, Holcomb has just come to the surface again—and those in the boat have got hold of him."

This was the way it appeared to Matt, and that both he and Townsend were correct was presently proved by the rowboat turning back in the direction of the wharf.

"Did you get him, McMillan?" called Townsend, as the boat came close.

"Yes," was the officer's response. "He's full of water, and unconscious, but there's plenty of life in him. We'll have him all right in a brace of shakes."

Holcomb, in nothing but his underclothes, was lifted to the pier. The men in the boat climbed after him, and he was rolled and prodded until he was able to open his eyes and speak.

"That's enough for us, Matt," said Townsend. "Let's go to your hotel. The idea that darted into my mind a little while ago is growing on me, and I'd like to put it up to you and hear what you think about it."

Matt, wet and uncomfortable, was also anxious to get to his hotel. Not only that, but he was curious to learn what it was that Townsend, otherwise Captain Nemo, Jr., had on his mind.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CAPE TOWN MYSTERY.

On their way to the hotel, Matt and Townsend met Dick Ferral. Carl, after exchanging his bathing suit for every-day clothes, had wandered about looking for Matt, and had only just come to the air ship to relieve Ferral. In a few words Matt told his chum what had happened, and Ferral accompanied Matt and Townsend to the hotel.

"You and Matt own the Hawk together, don't you, Ferral?" Townsend had asked.

"That's the way of it," Ferral had answered.

"Then I want to talk with the two of you."

These remarks merely served to whet the curiosity of the two boys.

On reaching the hotel, the three repaired at once to the boys' room, and after Matt had got into some dry clothing and all were seated comfortably, Townsend plunged at once into the subject that lay nearest his mind.

"It is clear to me," said he, "that Jurgens mixed up in this moving-picture business just for a 'blind.' He must have heard that I was coming to Atlantic City for a look at your air ship, King, and have laid his plans for the capture of the submarine. The *Grampus*, as near as I can figure out, was captured by confederates of Jurgens' while I was in the air with you. Jurgens had no idea that he would be able to secure that paper from me direct, but probably hoped to find it in the *Grampus*, or to take it from me when I returned to the submarine after that flight in the Hawk." [Pg 10]

"If Jurgens' men captured the *Grampus* while you were in the air with us, Mr. Townsend," said Matt, "the capture must have been effected in broad daylight, while the Inlet was alive with sailing craft. Would that have been possible?"

"Easily possible. The *Grampus* is a steel shell, you know, and what takes place aboard of her cannot be seen by any one on the outside. The skipper of the *Crescent* happened to be a friend of Jurgens', and the *Crescent* happened to be handily by to pick Jurgens out of the rowboat. We'll know more about that part of it as soon as McMillan investigates and reports. Just now, the point for us to remember is that luck has been with Jurgens. His men captured the submarine, Jurgens captured the paper, and the *Crescent*, with her skipper and crew, helped Jurgens and his clique to foil the ends of right and justice."

Townsend paused. He was a man of fifty-five or sixty, with gray mustache and gray hair, but with alert and piercing black eyes. His looks and manner were such as to inspire confidence, and both Matt and Dick felt that he was to be trusted implicitly.

"But why has Jurgens gone to all this trouble?" inquired Matt. "He has made himself a thief and a fugitive, and what does he hope to gain by it?"

"Ah," returned Townsend, "now you are touching upon the mystery of the Man from Cape Town. I shall have to tell you about that before you can get any clear understanding of what Jurgens has done.

"Nearly a year ago a ragged specimen of a man stopped me at the corner of Broad and Chestnut Streets, Philadelphia, and asked if I wasn't the man named Townsend who had invented and was then building a new submarine which was to have a cruising radius of several thousand miles. I told him that I was. Thereupon the stranger informed me that he was the Man from Cape Town, and that he wanted to borrow a dollar.

"The Man from Cape Town was very different from your ordinary beggar, and I handed him the dollar. Thereupon he took a folded paper from his coat, gave it to me, and asked me to keep it for him. He declared, gravely enough, that the paper was worth a fortune, and that when my submarine was completed, we would go in her to the place where the fortune had been tucked away, find it and divide it between us.

"That sort of talk led me to look upon the Man from Cape Town as a harmless lunatic. I discovered that the paper was a chart of the Bahama Islands, and that it gave the latitude and longitude of a particular island, together with other information necessary for the finding of what purported to be an iron chest.

"This chart I looked upon as rank moonshine, and tucked it away in a pigeonhole of my desk. Months passed, and I had almost forgotten the Man from Cape Town, his chart and his iron chest, when something occurred to bring the entire matter prominently to my mind.

"A night watchman at the yard where I was building the *Grampus* found a man going through my desk at midnight. When the fellow was captured, he was just getting away with a paper which he had abstracted from one of the pigeonholes. That paper was the chart, and the would-be thief was—Jurgens, Lattimer Jurgens.

"Jurgens had been a workman in the shipyard, but had been discharged for incompetency. While at the yard I presume he learned, in some manner known only to himself, that I had possession of the chart, that it was in my desk, and that it purported to locate a fortune.

"While Jurgens' attempted theft recalled the chart to my mind, it did not add anything to its importance in my estimation, for Jurgens was just the sort of man to take stock in such wild yarns about hidden treasure; however, in order to keep the chart from being stolen, I put it away in the office safe. As for Jurgens, I let him go with a warning.

"About three weeks after that I was called hurriedly to one of the city hospitals. There I found the Man from Cape Town, a total wreck and lying at the point of death. He had strength enough left to insist that the iron chest contained a fortune, and he made me promise to start for the Bahamas as soon as the *Grampus* was finished, find the chest, and then take it to his daughter, who lived in New Orleans, open it in her presence, and divide the contents equally.

"I still considered the Unknown as the subject of delusions; but, as I should want to try out the *Grampus* on a long cruise as soon as she was completed, I agreed to carry out the man's request. He died blessing me so fervently that I was a little ashamed of myself for not having more faith in his story.

"A few days, perhaps a week, later, Jurgens came to see me. He declared that the Man from Cape Town had been his brother, and that the chest, now that his brother was dead, belonged to him. I asked Jurgens where the chest came from, what it contained, and how it had happened to be cached in the Bahamas. These questions he could not answer. I had been fairly sure, all along, that Jurgens was not telling the truth, and his lack of information made me positive of it. I declined to give him the chart, or to treat with him in any way regarding it. Thereupon Jurgens left me, vowing vengeance, and asserting that, by hook or crook, he would obtain what he was pleased to call, his 'rights.'

"Some time later, when the *Grampus* was ready for sea, I shipped my crew and tried the boat out, up and down the Delaware. The trials resulted in a few changes to the machinery, and when the submarine was finally in shape, I made her ready for the trip to the Bahamas. The day we were to start, I read a column or more about the Hawk, and what you lads were doing here in Atlantic City. I have always been interested in air ships quite as much as in submarines, so I decided to come to Atlantic City and have a look at the Hawk before going to the Bahamas.

"At that time, I know positively that Jurgens was in this resort, making moving pictures for a firm in Chicago. Some one in his service must have telegraphed him of my change of plan, thus enabling him to lay his schemes to capture the *Grampus*. I tried to keep my movements as secret as possible, but it is certain that they leaked out.

"On leaving the *Grampus* to visit the beach, this afternoon, three trusty men were in charge of the submarine. The officer on duty at the Inlet wharf says that three men came there and claimed to have a letter from me to the man in charge of the *Grampus*; that the letter was opened by Cassidy, the machinist in charge of the boat, and that the men were admitted below decks. That, undoubtedly, is when the capture took place.

"As I said before, it is my belief that Jurgens either hoped to find the chart concealed in the *Grampus*, or else to capture me on my return from the beach and take the chart by force. Events worked the scheme out differently, and the chart was snatched from my hands while I was going over the papers I had taken from my pocket. Now, the chart is gone, and the *Grampus* is gone."

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Townsend relapsed into silence, his keen eyes leveled on Motor Matt's face.

The faces of Matt and Ferral, at that moment, were a study. It was a strange story they had heard, but that it was a true story they did not for a moment doubt.

"How much are you making, here in Atlantic City?" Townsend asked abruptly.

Matt told him, wondering what that had to do with the matter.

"You understand," Townsend went on, "that my interest is wholly in the *Grampus*. I must recover the boat. It is a fair surmise that Jurgens, and those with him, will lay a course for that particular island in the Bahamas. I have that chart, and all the other information contained in it, as clearly in my mind as though the paper itself was before my eyes. Furthermore, I questioned you so thoroughly about the Hawk, while we were in the air this afternoon, that I know the air ship's capabilities. In less than two weeks, Motor Matt, we could make a round trip to the Bahamas in your air ship. What I want is to charter the Hawk for two weeks, and to pay you five thousand dollars for the use of the craft. I am rich enough to do this, and my hope is that we will be able to recover the *Grampus*. If you boys will agree, I will pay over twenty-five hundred dollars before we start from Atlantic City and give you the remainder of the five thousand upon our return."

The two chums were thunderstruck. They had not had the least idea of the way Townsend's talk was trending.

"Sink me!" mumbled Ferral, "but that sounds like a large order."

"Not so large, perhaps," returned Townsend, "as it seems at first sight."

"How long a trip is it?" asked Matt, a bit dazed.

"Perhaps a thousand miles, as the crow flies, or fifteen hundred as we'll have to go. We could follow down the coast line, and then jump across the Florida Straits to the Bahamas. You tell me you can make thirty miles an hour in the Hawk, and that you can do even better with favoring winds. Say, at a rough estimate, that we make seven hundred miles a day. Why, inside of three days we should be where we want to go in the Bahamas. If we spend three or four days there, and as much time getting back, ten days ought to see the trip completed."

"But if we strike rough weather?" asked Matt.

"This is the time of year when the weather ought to be at its best. Nevertheless, if a stormy day comes, we could alight and wait for the weather to clear. Even at that, we ought to be back in Atlantic City in two weeks."

"It's a good deal of a guess, Mr. Townsend, as to whether, even if we do find the *Grampus* in the Bahamas, you will be able to get her back."

"I am staking five thousand on the guess," said Townsend, quietly. "You're the right sort of a fellow to make such a venture a success, Motor Matt, and the proposition I have made you I wouldn't make to every one. What do you say?"

Matt and Dick withdrew for a little talk. They would lose their "advance bookings" for flights in the Hawk, but they stood to make a greater profit by this air cruise to the Bahamas than they could possibly hope for in Atlantic City.

"When do you want to start?" Matt asked.

"We should start in the morning," replied Townsend, "as early as possible."

"We'll go," said Matt.

"Good!" cried Townsend, a gleam of satisfaction darting through his eyes.

Taking a checkbook and a fountain pen from his pocket, he drew a chair up to the table and wrote for a few moments.

"There's your twenty-five hundred," said he, handing the check to Matt. "I've made out the check to King & Ferral. I'll leave you boys to do the outfitting, and will meet you on the beach, ready for the start, at seven in the morning. Good night."

With that, Townsend shook hands with Matt and Dick and went away. Dick, highly delighted, started in to do a sailor's hornpipe.

"Twenty-five hundred," he gloried, "and twenty-five hundred more to come. Strike me lucky, mate, but we're going to be millionaires if this keeps up."

"We've got to earn the money yet, Dick," returned Matt, "and that cruise to the Bahamas will be anything but a picnic."

CHAPTER VII.

OFF FOR THE BAHAMAS.

Next morning Matt and Dick were astir at three o'clock. The gasoline tank was filled and a reserve supply of fuel taken aboard. The oil supply was also looked after, and rations of food and water were stowed in the car. This accomplished, there was a short flight to the gas works where the bag of the airship was filled to its utmost capacity.

The twenty-five hundred dollar check was left with a friend to be deposited, and by six-thirty the Hawk and her crew were again on the beach with everything in readiness for a record flight.

Carl's delight, as soon as he learned what was in prospect, reached a point that made it almost morbid. He was of little use in the outfitting, and ran circles around the Hawk trying to do something which either Matt or Dick was already doing. Finally, about six o'clock, Matt sent Carl to the hotel to get their small amount of personal luggage and to bring a hot breakfast for all hands.

At a quarter to seven, when Townsend came along the beach, the hurried meal had been finished. The owner of the *Grampus* gave the boys a cheery good morning, and began placing in the car a bundle of maps and charts, and a sextant.

"I presume," said he, "that we can figure our course all right by dead reckoning, but in case we find any difficulty about that, the sextant will enable us to determine our exact location. The maps are all of the coast line, and are so complete that I think we shall be able to tell, just from the look of the country over which we are passing, where we are. I have also a barometer, and, as luck will have it, fair weather is indicated. There's a compass, too, wrapped up with the maps, and if you lads have looked after the victualling, I think we are fully equipped for a dash to the Bahamas."

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For Townsend's benefit, Matt enumerated the stores that had been placed aboard.

"You have missed nothing, Matt," observed Townsend, approvingly, "and I am pleased to see it. If there is nothing else to keep us, we had better cast off and make the start."

Matt gave Townsend his position aboard. Dick and Carl knew the stations they were to occupy, and after they had released the cables and thrown them into the car, they took up their customary places.

Matt turned over the engine, which, after a volley of "pops," settled down into steady running order.

"South by west, Matt," called Townsend. "That will start us across Delaware Bay in the vicinity of Cape May."

"South by west it is, sir," said Matt, adjusting the ascensional and steering rudder to carry the Hawk upward and in the direction indicated.

At a height of five hundred feet the Hawk was brought to an even keel, the racing propeller carrying her through the air at a speed which was slightly better than thirty miles an hour.

"Fine!" exclaimed Townsend, taking a look over the rail and watching Absecon Island slip away behind them. "We'll eat up the miles, at this pace, and with no stops to make."

"But the *Grampus* is also eating up the miles," said Matt, "and will probably make no more stops than we do. How fast can she run, Mr. Townsend?"

"She can do fifteen miles submerged, and twenty to twenty-five on the surface."

"Her course to the Bahamas will be more direct than ours."

"True enough, but our speed is so much faster that, in spite of the roundabout course we're taking, we'll be able to reach Turtle Key and be there to receive the *Grampus* when she arrives."

"Durtle Key," put in Carl. "Dot's vere ve vas going, eh?"

"That's where the iron chest is supposed to be, and, of course, that's where the *Grampus* will make for. The Bahamas are all of coral formation and are underlaid with many caverns. For the most part, the islands are hollow; and it is in a hollow under Turtle Key that the Man from Cape Town claimed to have hidden the chest."

"Iss dere pread fruit und odder dropical t'ings on der island?" asked Carl, who was looking forward to a brief period of romance in an island paradise.

"As described on the chart," replied Townsend, "Turtle Key is no more than a hummock of coral, bare as the palm of your hand, and with a surface measuring less than an acre in extent. There is no water, no trees, and no inhabitants if we except the turtles."

Carl was visibly disappointed.

"I vas hoping I could climb some trees und shake down a gouple oof loafs oof pread fruit," he mourned, "und I vas t'inking, meppy, dot I could catch a monkey und pring him pack, und a barrot vat couldt say t'ings. Py shiminy, I don'd like dot kind oof a tesert islandt."

"Where is it, Mr. Townsend," asked Dick, "on the eastern or western side of the group?"

"On the western side, just off Great Bahama Island and well in the Florida Straits."

"I sailed all through that group on the old *Billy Ruffian*," went on Dick, "wherever the channels were deep enough to float us. There's a good deal of shoal water, and a lot of places where you can go off soundings at a jump. That submarine, if she takes a straight course, will have to keep on the surface a good share of the time."

"Jurgens will take to the Florida Straits and then turn in when he gets opposite Turtle Key. That will give him deep water all the way. After I left you boys last night," added Townsend, shifting the subject, "I had a call from McMillan. He told me that the skipper of the *Crescent* claimed to have had nothing to do with the picking up of Jurgens off the Heinz pier. Whistler, one of the men on the sailboat, got the three men comprising the crew on his side, and they overpowered the skipper, tied him hand and foot and laid him on the floor of the cuddy. Anyhow, McMillan says that when he boarded the *Crescent*, the skipper was helpless in the cabin and all the others who had been on the boat had disappeared. It looks a little 'fishy' but that must have been the way of it. The skipper of the *Crescent* couldn't afford to harbor a fugitive like Jurgens."

"It was all a brazen piece of work from start to finish," observed Matt. "The capture of the *Grampus* was second only to the desperate play Jurgens made when he stole the chart. Jurgens, from what I saw and heard while Holcomb and I were aboard the *Grampus*, knows a good deal about the submarine, but——"

"He learned all that while he was working in the shipyard," put in Townsend.

"But does he know enough to run the craft?" queried Matt.

"I think not. He and his gang are probably forcing Cassidy, my machinist, to run the submarine for him. If Cassidy, Burke and Harris, my men in the *Grampus*, succeeded in turning on their captors and recapturing the boat, we'll be having all our work for nothing—that is, so far as the *Grampus* is concerned. In that event, we'll look for the iron chest."

"Dot's der talk!" cried Carl. "Ve vill findt der dreasure. It vas some birate dreasure, I bed you! I wouldt like to findt a chest full mit bieces oof eight und dot odder druck vat birates used to take from peobles before dey made dem valk der blank."

"Bosh, Carl!" exclaimed Dick, disgustedly. "You're a lubber to take stock in any such yarn. Anyhow, I should think you'd had enough to do with pirates."

This reference to the way Carl had butted into the moving pictures brought grins to the faces of Townsend and Matt. It was a sore spot with Carl, and he tried at once to get his companions to thinking of something else.

He picked up the sextant and turned it over and over in his hands.

"How you findt out vere ve vas mit dis?" he queried.

"Hand it over, Carl," replied Townsend, "and I'll show you."

Carl was standing by the rail. Just as he started to hand the sextant to Townsend, a gust of air struck the Hawk and she made a sidewise lurch that jerked the car uncomfortably. Carl let go the sextant and grabbed with both hands at the rail; and the sextant, flung a little outward by the motion of Carl's hand, slipped clear of the rail and dropped downward into space.

A cry of dismay escaped Townsend and Dick.

"It isn't so easy to buy another, Carl," said Matt, circling the Hawk about and dropping earthward. "We've got to get that sextant, if we can. Watch close all of you, and try and see where it fell."

At that moment the Hawk had been approaching Stone Harbor, and was above the beach. The sextant may have been ruined by the fall, but Matt was hoping against hope that it would be found in usable condition, and that they would not have to delay their voyage to land at some seaport and buy another.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN ACCIDENT.

"I think I see it, mate!" called Dick, as the Hawk came closer to the clear stretch of sand. "To the right a little—about two points—and keep her dropping as she is."

"I see it, too!" declared Townsend, leaning out over the rail.

When ascending or descending, the car of the air ship, as might naturally be supposed, was always tilted. In the present instance it was inclined at a dangerous angle, for Matt was trying to bring the craft to an even keel as nearly over the spot where the sextant was lying as he could.

The inclination of the car made it exceedingly difficult for those who were standing to keep their feet, and it was only by clinging to the rail that they could do so. Matt had a chair, and there were supports against which he could brace his feet, thus leaving his hands free at all times to manage the motor.

When about twelve feet above the beach, another gust of air struck the air ship, buffeting her roughly sideways, Townsend was leaning so far over the rail that the jerk of the car caused him to lose his balance. His hands were torn from the rail and he pitched headlong out of the car.

At this mishap, which threatened tragic consequences, consternation seized the boys.

"Donnervetter!" whooped Carl, "he vill be killed."

Quickly as he could, Matt brought the Hawk to the beach. There was no way of mooring the craft, and she swung back and forth in the wind, making it necessary for Matt to stay aboard.

"Tumble out, Dick, you and Carl," Matt called. "See if Townsend has been hurt."

Dick and Carl found Townsend trying to get up. His face was set as with pain, and it was clearly evident that he had not come through the mishap uninjured.

"What's the matter?" asked Dick.

"It's my foot," answered Townsend, stifling a groan. "I turned in the air and struck almost on my feet. I'm lucky, I suppose, not to have landed on my head and broken my neck. It's a sprain, I guess, but it hurts like Sam Hill. Help me up."

Dick and Carl got on each side of Townsend and lifted him erect. The injury to his right foot was so great that he could not step on it, and was almost carried back to the car by the two boys.

"We'd better put in at Stone Harbor, Mr. Townsend," said Matt, a troubled look crossing his face, "and let a doctor have a look at you."

"I'm sure it's only a sprain," returned Townsend, pluckily, "and we won't delay the voyage by stopping at Stone Harbor. Just make me comfortable on the floor of the car and have Carl take off my shoe and wrap a bandage around the foot. I'll get along. It was my own fault," he added, "for I had no business to be leaning so far over the rail. Pick up the sextant, Ferral."

Dick went for the sextant. It had fallen in soft sand and, although damaged to some extent, had not lost its usefulness.

While Dick was recovering the sextant, Carl was making Townsend as comfortable as possible on the floor of the car. A folded canvas shelter, which Matt had devised as a covering for the Hawk, was brought into requisition and spread out for Townsend to lie on. Townsend's shoe was then removed. The foot and ankle as yet showed no signs of the injury, but every touch caused so much pain that Townsend had to clench his teeth to keep from crying out.

Matt, for such an emergency as had just presented itself, always carried a bottle of arnica in the toolbox. Carl got out the arnica, soaked a rag with it and bound the rag around Townsend's foot. Over this another bandage was placed, and Townsend lay back on his makeshift couch and rested.

"It would only delay us a few hours," said Matt, "to stop at Stone Harbor and have a doctor give your foot proper attention."

"I don't think that's necessary, Matt," answered Townsend. "Get under way again. We've lost half an hour already."

The accident, although it had resulted in an injury which might have been infinitely more serious, dropped a pall over the spirits of the three boys. If omens counted for anything, the cruise was to

end in disaster.

Matt started the machinery and got the air ship aloft and once more headed on her course. How he and his chums were ever going to reach Turtle Key, hampered by an injured passenger, was more than he knew. The outlook was dubious, to say the least.

Noon found them over the State of Delaware and reaching along toward Chesapeake Bay. The wind grew steady and shifted until it was almost directly behind them, and the Hawk went spinning through the air at the rate of forty miles an hour.

As if to offset this favorable trend of wind and weather, Townsend's injury appeared to be growing steadily worse. His ankle was swollen and there was a dark, angry look to the skin. The pain was intense, but Townsend insisted that the Hawk should keep steadily on her way. At all costs, he declared, they must make the most of the favoring breeze.

The rations were drawn upon for dinner, Dick eating first and then taking Matt's place among the levers while he bolted his food.

Early in the afternoon the Hawk sailed over the broad mouth of Chesapeake Bay and was saluted by an American man-of-war that was passing below them.

Carl busied himself taking care of Townsend, and Matt and Dick gave their attention to the maps. Townsend had eaten a good dinner and was feeling somewhat better.

"What was that?" he asked, rousing up as the sound of the saluting cannon rattled on his ears.

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Matt explained, and Townsend watched Dick as he dipped the stars and stripes that always flew from the rear end of the car.

"We've got to keep pegging along, night and day," said Townsend, "until we reach the island. After that we can take things a little easier."

"If there's no timber on the island," spoke up Dick, "how are we going to moor the Hawk? The island's so small that we'll have our hands full keeping the air ship from being blown out to sea."

"In a pinch," suggested Matt, "we can fill that canvas covering for the Hawk with sand and tie the craft to it."

"Sandbags would be better, if we had them," remarked Townsend. "Prop me up a little, Carl," he added, to the Dutch boy; "I want to do some writing."

Carl bolstered Townsend up with one of the boxes of provisions, and the injured man put in an hour of pencil work on the back of an old letter. By then it was evident that his ankle was paining him again, and he put away the pencil and the results of his labor, had the box removed and laid flat down in the car. Presently he was asleep. Dick came aft along the rail for a few words with Matt.

"We'll never be able to take Townsend to the island, matey," said Dick, in a low tone. "It's my opinion that he's worse off than he thinks he is. That don't look to me like a sprain, but like a break."

Matt nodded glumly.

"It's hard luck, Dick," he answered, "but I'm of your opinion. Still, what can we do? Townsend has chartered the Hawk for two weeks, and we're under his orders. If he insists that we stay aloft with him and take him to Turtle Key, we'll have to try it."

"I guess you've nicked it. We're under orders, as you say, and we've got to do just what Townsend tells us, but I'll be keelhauled if the prospect ain't discouraging. We're out to win that five thousand, and I guess we can do it, but I'd like mighty well to help Townsend and not stand by and see him spend his money without getting a fair return for it."

"That's the way I feel," agreed Matt. "The weather's good, the wind favoring, and all we can do is to keep fanning along. By to-morrow, something may happen to give things a brighter look. Go forward, Dick, watch the maps and keep a sharp lookout. Let me know where we are from time to time."

The motor hummed steadily, and hour after hour the Hawk clove her way through the air. They passed over Newport News and Norfolk, and could see the inhabitants of each town running along the streets and looking up at them.

All sounds from the earth reached those in the air ship with weird distinctness. The cries of the people, the galloping hoofs of a horse, the rattle of a wagon floated upward, clear and strong.

Questions were shouted to the boys, but before they could have answered the swiftly moving Hawk had carried them out of earshot. They made it a rule to do no talking with the people below, not having the time for any extended conversation and knowing well that what little they could say would only increase the general curiosity instead of lessening it.

Well to the south of Norfolk the air ship reached out along the Carolina coast. When the sun went down, and it was falling dark, lights were beginning to gleam in a city which, from the maps, the boys knew to be Wilmington. Matt's watch told him it was seven o'clock. They had been twelve hours on the wing and had covered a distance which, by air line, measured more than five hundred miles.

It was decided by the boys that the night should be divided into three watches, and that during each watch one of them should take his "turn below," as Dick expressed it.

During the first watch, from seven to eleven, Dick was to be in charge of the motor and Carl was to take the lookout, while Matt slept; from eleven to three, Matt was to look after the motor, Carl was to continue on lookout duty, and Dick was to sleep; and from three to seven, Carl was to sleep and Dick was to relieve him.

As soon as the lights of Wilmington had died into a glow behind the car, Matt laid himself down beside Townsend and was soon "taking his stretch off the land, full and by, forty knots," as Dick remarked to Carl.

Matt had slept nearly his allotted four hours, although it did not seem to him as though he had much more than closed his eyes, when he was aroused by the report of a firearm and a startled yell from Carl.

In a twinkling the young motorist was on his feet, hanging to the rail, peering about him and asking what was the matter.

Before either Matt or Carl could answer, another report echoed out, the ringing impact of a bullet against the car's framework was heard, and then the whistle of the ball as it caromed off into space.

Springing to the levers, Matt jerked at the one which lifted or lowered the rudder. In another moment, the Hawk was climbing up the moonbeams like a black streak.

CHAPTER IX.

MATT AND HIS CHUMS GO IT ALONE.

"Hunters are taking shots at us," cried Matt, "and we've got to get away from them. Where are we, Dick?"

"I had just studied one of the maps with the aid of the electric torch," replied Dick, "and had made up my mind that we were close to the line separating South Carolina from Georgia. Just as I had decided that point, bang came the first shot. Sink me, but that second shot came close to the motor! Lucky it was turned by the framework of the car."

"We'd better fly a little higher while we're going over this country," said Matt. "It won't do to have a bullet ripping its way through the bag, or putting the machinery out of commission, or doing any damage to you, or me, or Carl, or Townsend."

Matt picked up the torch, snapped on the light and focussed the glow on the face of his watch.

"It's nearly eleven, Dick," he went on, "and time for you to take a snooze. Carl and I will take over the ship, while you lie down and get a little rest."

During the balance of the night nothing went wrong. The wind had gone down with the sun, and through the cool quiet of the night the Hawk reeled off her customary thirty miles an hour. At three in the morning Carl awoke Dick, and from that on till seven o'clock the Dutch boy's snores were steady and continuous.

Morning brought no improvement in Townsend's condition. His face was flushed and his eyes were bright and feverish. He ate some of the breakfast which Carl dug out of the ration bag, but it was plain that he forced himself to do it.

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"Where are we, Matt?" he asked.

"Below Jacksonville," Matt answered, "and traveling down the Florida coast."

"How's the wind?"

"It's abeam, Mr. Townsend," spoke up Ferral, "and we're slanted against it."

"That interferes with our speed, I suppose?"

"We're making barely twenty miles an hour, as I figure it," said Matt.

"Well, that will drop us into Palm Beach this evening—and that's where I'll have to give up. I must have broken a bone in my ankle, and the thing for me to do is to stay at Palm Beach and have it attended to. I thought, yesterday, that I might get over it, and so make myself of some use, but I see now that that's impossible. I'm only a hindrance and a drag, and it's necessary, if I want to avoid serious consequences, to have that foot attended to. My leg is of more importance than the *Grampus*, so I'll give up, right here, and you can drop me at Palm Beach and go back to Atlantic City. Will the twenty-five hundred I have paid you be enough for your time and trouble?"

"More than enough," answered Matt, "if that is the way you want it, Mr. Townsend."

"It isn't the way I want it—not by a long chalk!" declared Townsend, vehemently, "but it seems to be the way I've got to have it. I've not only lost the *Grampus*, but I have also proven false to the promise I made the Man from Cape Town. If I felt that I could go on, with the least show of success, I'd not hang back; but I'm crippled, and I feel that, owing to the lack of proper medical attention, I'm getting weaker and weaker all the time!"

Heartfelt regret mingled in the words with the pain Townsend was suffering.

"How far is it from Palm Beach to Turtle Key, Mr. Townsend?" asked Matt.

"Less than a hundred miles, straight across the Florida Straits."

"If this landward breeze holds," went on Matt, musingly, "we could reach Turtle Key in three hours after we left the mainland."

Townsend shifted his position a little and fastened his gleaming black eyes speculatively on the young motorist's face.

"What do you mean by that?" he demanded.

"If you can't go to Turtle Key," said Matt, quietly, "why can't the rest of us go? We may not stand so good a chance of recovering the *Grampus* as though you were along and able to help, but we might be able to find whether or not there's an iron chest on the island; and, if we had the opportunity, we might do what we could to recapture the submarine."

"I can't order you to do anything like that, Matt, but I had decided, in my own mind, that you would say something like you have just said. That's your style, my boy. If you want to go and look for the island and the iron chest, well and good. It will be worth twenty-five hundred more to me to know that I tried to carry out my promise to the Man from Cape Town, and that I couldn't do it because the iron chest was only a figment of his disordered imagination. Go and look for the chest, but it won't do for you to attempt to cope with Jurgens and the ruffians with him in the *Grampus*. Yesterday, when it began to grow upon me that I could not see this expedition through to the end, I drew up a copy of that stolen chart as nearly as I can remember it. I believe the copy is fairly accurate."

Townsend took the folded letter from his pocket and gave it to Carl, who passed it along to Matt.

"You can study that," said Townsend, "and it will tell you all I know. Do what you can, and, no matter what the result is, come back and report to me at Palm Beach."

Townsend did no more talking. The pain he was suffering made talking an effort, and he sank back and closed his eyes.

"Can we do it, matey?" asked Dick. "Can we cross a hundred miles of ocean and nose out a little turtle-back in all that raft of islands and keys?"

"Do you know anything about navigation, Dick? Can you take a chronometer and a sextant and figure out latitude and longitude?"

"I'd be a juggings if I couldn't. Why, mate, it's one of the first things they teach you on the training ship."

"Get in here and manage the Hawk, Dick, while I look over this chart."

Ferral dropped in among the levers and Matt went forward and sat down on the floor of the car.

The chart embraced part of the eastern shore line of Florida and took in some of the westernmost islands of the Bahama group. From Palm Beach a straight line was drawn, east by south to a dot below the western point of Great Bahama Island. The dot was marked Turtle Key, and its latitude and longitude were given.

Below this diagram, in the left-hand corner of the sheet, Turtle Key was shown in amplified form, an irregular circle of sand with a black cross on its western side. The cross was labeled, "Cavern; can be entered from the shore, or by boat at high tide. Iron chest in the cavern."

"I believe we can find it, pards," Matt finally announced. "Anyhow, I'm for trying. If we can do anything to help Townsend, I think it's our duty. When we started from Atlantic City, this had the look of a wild-goose chase. It may still be no more than that—the only way we can tell is by running out the trail."

"I wouldn't like to haf anyt'ing habben so dot ve come down in der ocean," observed Carl, "aber you bed you I would like to haf some looks indo dot cave for der iron chest. I haf readt aboutt birates on der Spanish Main, und I would be so habby as I can't dell to get my handts on some oof deir plunder."

"One for all, and all for one, old ship!" cried Ferral. "Sink or swim, Carl and I are with you."

Getting down the Florida coast, battling with a side wind every foot of the way, was slow work. It was five o'clock in the evening before the place was reached, a landing made, and Townsend removed to a hotel and placed in the care of a doctor.

The doctor, after a short examination, declared that Townsend had sustained a fracture of one of the smaller bones in the ankle, and that he would have to keep to his bed and remain under constant treatment for at least a week. So far as any serious results were concerned, however, there would be none. The trouble had been aggravated by the delay in receiving proper attention, but that was something which would now be remedied.

"I wouldn't start before morning, Matt," were Townsend's last words to the young motorist. "The wind, which just now is favorable, will go down with the sun, so you wouldn't gain much by going on to-night. Besides, it will be better if you are somewhere near the place by noon, to-morrow, so Ferral can 'shoot' the sun and find out where you are. Watch the barometer, and if it promises good weather to-morrow, make the attempt. Don't fail to come back and report to me. Good-by, and good luck."

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"It looks like a whale of a job, messmate," remarked Dick, as he and Matt walked away from the hotel. "I suppose it looks so big because it's so much of a novelty. I guess this is about the first time any one ever went gunning for treasure in an air ship!"

"Well," said Matt, decisively, "it's up to us to go it alone and find out just what there is on Turtle Key. There are so many of those little islets scattered through the Bahamas that we'll have to 'shoot' the sun, as Townsend calls it, in order to find whether or not we're on the right spot."

"If we can find the cave that ought to settle it."

"All the islands have caves. If we're going at this thing we've got to do it right; we've got to find the *right* key, and the *right* cave, and then there can be no possible doubt when we return and report to Townsend that there's no iron chest."

"You think that's all a yarn for the marines, eh?"

"Nothing else; but Townsend is bound by a promise, and he's the sort of man who doesn't make a promise lightly."

The three chums slept out the night in the car of the air ship. When morning dawned, the barometer indicated fair weather. The wind was north by east, quartering offshore, but it was so light as not to cause Matt much concern.

Matt was the first of the three to be astir. After he had looked at the barometer and taken note of the wind, he awoke Dick and Carl.

"We're off for Turtle Key, pards," cried Matt, "and we're going it alone. Up with you, and let's put to sea."

CHAPTER X.

THE AIR SHIP SPRINGS A LEAK.

The Hawk had been moored between two trees. The landing had been easily made, the preceding afternoon, and Matt was confident that the ascent could be made as easily. And such would have been the case, had nothing gone wrong.

The cables were untied from the trees and taken aboard, the rudder tilted to pilot the Hawk skyward, the motor was started, and presently the power was switched into the propeller.

Then, just as the air ship was given a boost upward, the engine stopped dead. Without the power of the propeller behind her the car became unmanageable, and the wind, faint though it was, tossed the big gas bag against the limbs of one of the trees.

This lasted only a moment, for, as suddenly as it had stopped the engine had taken hold again, and the propeller began to whirl. Quick as a wink Matt depressed the steering rudder. The Hawk dipped downward, cleared the branches, and then was brought up to continue the climb into the air.

"A tight squeak, mate!" gasped Ferral. "Whatever was the matter with the engine?"

"Any one of a dozen things may have happened," replied Matt, "but we seem to be all right now. Come back here, Dick, and do the driving while I look over the motor."

Matt could see nothing wrong with the motor, and felt sure that, no matter what had caused the sudden failure of the engine, the trouble would not happen again.

Having finished his examination of the machinery, Matt turned his attention to the gas bag. The top of the bag, of course, he could not see, but there were no indications that anything was wrong. With a sense of relief, the young motorist returned to his post and sent Dick ahead to join Carl at the lookout.

There was something to quicken the pulses in the mere thought of venturing far out over the sea in a "dirigible." The Hawk was mistress of the air, but, if any accident happened and she was precipitated into the sea, the steelwork of the car would drag her under and bring certain death to all aboard.

But Matt and his chums had implicit confidence in the Hawk. They had sailed her over Lake Michigan, and why could they not sail her across the Florida Straits?

Carl, leaning over the rail, had a dismal thought as they left the line of white surf and headed boldly toward the heaving horizon to the east and south.

"I vonder oof ve vas coming pack any more?" murmured Carl. "Der ocean iss full oof wrecks, und I hope dot ve von't be wrecked in it mitoudt any poats to ged away in."

Dick laughed, turned around and reached out to slap Carl on the shoulder.

"Belay, there, with your gloomy remarks, mate!" cried Dick. "I'd rather be in the air with the Hawk than down there in the staunchest ship that ever left the stays. The barometer says fine weather—and we know what the Hawk can do even with a wholes'l breeze in her teeth. So long as the sky is clear there's no need to worry; and if we see a squall coming up, we'll put about and scud for the mainland. Buck up, old ship! Think of the iron chest."

"Dot's vat's der madder!" exclaimed Carl, brightening. "Ve're bound for der islandt to look for dresure, und dot makes me feel so goot as I can't dell. I bed you somet'ing for nodding dot ve findt dot chest, und ve pring him pack to Downsent und he vill take him py New Orleans. Hoop-a-la!"

Steadily and tirelessly the Hawk made her way across the heaving waters. There was no way by which the boys could figure her speed, but, carefully weighing the force of the wind, they guessed it at twenty-five miles an hour.

"That means," said Ferral, "that in four hours we ought to be close to Turtle Key."

"Providing we don't get off our course," returned Matt.

"You can't do that, mate, with the compass right in front of you."

"It's only a patch of land we're looking for, Dick, and even if the course is kept we're liable to find ourselves a few points off, one side or the other."

"Right-o! Well, let her flicker and we'll see where we are in four hours from the time we started." [Pg 17]

"Ve're oudt oof sighdt oof land," quavered Carl.

"And just that much nearer catching sight of Turtle Key and the iron chest," laughed Dick.

"Sure!" and Carl echoed the laugh. "It's funny how I forged aboutt dot chest. I vonder vas it Captain Kitt vat put der chest in der cafe? Vat you t'ink?"

"I'm not doing any thinking about how the chest got there, mate; just so we find it, that'll be enough for me. What's this?" and Dick stooped suddenly and brought up a small roll closely wrapped in canvas.

"That must belong to Townsend," said Matt. "Perhaps there's something in it that we can use. Open it up, Dick, and see what you find."

Ferral untied the parcel, removed the canvas wrapping and revealed two revolvers and a box of cartridges.

"Well, strike me lucky!" he exclaimed. "We're a nice outfit of treasure hunters, I must say, to start after a pirate's treasure without thinking to bring along a shooting iron! Townsend had a heap more sense than we had, Matt."

"Townsend," replied Matt, "was thinking of Jurgens when he brought those guns along."

"We ought to be thinking of Jurgens, too."

"Put them away somewhere," said Matt. "If we need them—which I hope we won't—we'll know where they are."

Dick dropped the weapons into one of the boxes of supplies.

The heaving blue horizon now surrounded the boys on every hand. The reflection that there was only a few hundred cubic feet of gas between them and disaster was not pleasant, and they tried to keep their minds away from it. It was easy to sidetrack Carl when his thoughts disturbed him too much, for Dick and Matt had only to speak of the iron chest and he immediately forgot everything else. Matt had no faith in the chest, and Dick did not seem to have much, but nevertheless it was a good thing to conjure with in Carl's case.

"Half-past eight," announced Matt, "and we're two hours out and ought to be halfway to where we're going."

The next hour dragged a little, but Carl beguiled the time by keeping a sharp lookout ahead through a pair of binoculars. Matt and Dick had bought four pairs of binoculars for the use of passengers whom they carried aloft from Atlantic City, but only one pair had been brought along on this southern cruise.

By half-past nine Carl had seen nothing of the island, but Matt had seen something which had caused his blood to run cold and had brought gray anxiety to his face.

The gas bag was losing its buoyancy!

Matt was first sensible of this when he tried to force the Hawk to a higher altitude. The craft rose sluggishly in answer to the push of the whirling propeller, and when the ship was brought to an even keel, again, she showed a tendency to settle.

Casting his eyes upward, Matt saw that the bag had lost its distended appearance and was getting flabby. Here and there a wrinkle appeared in the varnished silk.

The bag had been coated with a preparation which was almost proof against leakage; and yet here was undeniable evidence that gas was escaping from the bag, slowly but steadily. It was like the life blood dripping from the veins of all in the car.

"Sweep your glasses over the ocean, Carl!" called Matt. "See if you can see a ship. There ought to be vessels crossing the straits between Florida and the islands, and there ought to be coasters moving north and south."

Dick whirled around. There was something in Matt's voice that startled him.

"Why do we want to look for a ship?" he demanded.

"Because the gas bag has sprung a leak," answered Matt, speaking as calmly as he could, "and we've got to find an island or a ship before very long."

Carl fell back against the rail and almost dropped the binoculars.

"Don't say dot!" he cried. "Himmelblitzen, Matt! Oof der gas goes oudt oof der palloon vat vill ve do? Durn aroundt und make for der Florida coast!"

"It's too far. The gas would be all out of the bag before we could get a quarter of the way back."

Carl looked up at the sagging envelope overhead, and then he stared down at the heaving waters below. With a shake of the shoulders, he picked up the glasses and got to his feet.

"It vas no use plubbering aroundt ofer vat can't be heluped," said he, gamely. "Oof ve haf got to find a ship, den py shinks ve vill findt vone."

"That's the talk, mate," approved Ferral, albeit in a voice that was a bit husky.

There was no sail in sight, and no smoke.

"We're south of Great Bahama, Matt," said Ferral, "and this wind will help us in that direction. Why not change our course? The Great Bahama is a large island, and we can find it quicker than we can Turtle Key."

"I was about to suggest that," answered Matt, "and was waiting only to hear whether or not there was a ship anywhere in this vicinity."

Shifting the rudder, he put the Hawk on her new course. The wind not only hastened the craft onward, but also helped to buoy her up, just as the current of a stream helps to float a swimmer.

"Where is the leak?" went on Ferral, drawing a hand across his eyes and trying to realize what the escape of the gas meant for them.

Matt's announcement had chilled and dazed him.

"It's in the very worst place it could be," said Matt, "and that's on top of the bag. The gas is rushing out and is constantly making the hole larger. See how those wrinkles are gathering on the under side!"

Dick passed his eyes over the bag.

"What caused the leak? Have you any notion, Matt?"

"It must have been the branches of that tree we struck against when we started."

"But the bag didn't show any signs of a leak *then*."

"Probably there was no leak, but that the envelope was chafed and weakened. The pressure of the gas has since made a hole, and the hole is getting larger every second."

Matt pushed the motor to top speed. For a time there was silence in the car—silence broken only by the roar of the ocean and by the steady hum of the motor. A calmness, the calmness of desperation, settled over the three chums.

"We'll do the best we can, mates," said Dick, "and if we fail it will be while we're making a good fight to save ourselves. If—"

Just here a frantic yell came from Carl.

"A ship! Py chimineddy, dere's a ship! I knowed as vell as I know anyt'ing dot Modor Matt's luck vouldn't go pack on him. Crowd on der power, bard! Pud efery ounce oof enerchy in der bropeller! Ve vill vin oudt yet—yah, so helup me!"

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Snatching the binoculars from Carl's hand, Dick focussed them on the object that had claimed Carl's attention.

CHAPTER XI.

WRECKED!

"It's not a ship, Carl," said Dick.

"Ach, du lieber," wailed Carl, "don'd tell me dot!"

"But it's something just as good, and perhaps better. It's an island."

"Turtle Key!" jubilated Carl, shortsighted as usual and glad only that they were perhaps coming closer to the iron chest. "Hoop-a-la!"

"No," went on Dick, "not Turtle Key. It's another island."

"How you know dot?"

"I can see some palm trees. Townsend told us that Turtle Key has no trees."

"A good thing for us that it isn't Turtle Key!" declared Matt, plucking up hope. "If we're to be wrecked, the more comfortable the place we're wrecked in, the better. What could we possibly do on a sand hill in the middle of the ocean? If there are trees on that island it may be inhabited. How far away is it, Dick?"

"A mile or more, matey, but just how far it's hard to tell. Bear off a point to starboard—that'll lay us in a direct line with the land."

Matt's anxious eyes were on the gas bag. He watched its diminishing bulk and tried to figure on how long it would keep them out of the water. The tendency of the air ship to settle was now most pronounced. Matt could only fight it by tilting the rudder upward and driving the motor to its full limit. This, of course, diminished somewhat the forward motion; but the breeze,

fortunately, was freshening, and the speed lost in keeping the bag in the air was more than compensated by the increased force of the wind.

The island could now be plainly seen by the naked eye. It was low and sandy and only two or three palm trees could be seen. The size of the island dashed Matt's hope of finding it inhabited.

"Keep her moving, mate!" shouted Ferral. "We're coming closer! A quarter of a mile farther and we'll alight on solid ground."

Matt was fighting a fierce battle with the diminishing gas. Every move he could think of was brought into play. From a five hundred-foot elevation the Hawk descended to four hundred feet, to three and then to two.

The craft was tilted sharply upward, the racing propeller trying vainly to drive her back to the heights she was surely and steadily losing.

Matt called Dick and Carl back toward the stern in order to free the forward part of the car of their weight and make it easier to keep the Hawk's nose in the air. This maneuver met with some success, although the air ship continued to settle by the stern, coming nearer and nearer the tumbling waves.

The island was so close now that those aboard could see a little cove in its shore line. The tilted air ship, like some stricken monster, was being carried toward this cove by the wind.

"That bit of a bay is a good place for us to come down, matey," said Dick.

"Almost any place will be good enough," answered Matt, grimly, "just so it's close enough to the shore."

"Der pag," cried Carl, "ain'd more dan haluf so pig as id vas."

"Throw over some of that plunder!" ordered Matt. "Not the water cask or the provisions, but anything else you can lay hands on."

The binoculars went first, then the mooring ropes and a few other objects which could be of no particular use to castaways on a desert island.

The effect was instantly noticeable and, for a brief space, the Hawk seemed to stay her descent. In a few minutes she had drifted almost over the cove.

Just at that moment the hissing of the escaping gas grew to redoubled volume, proving that the rent had suddenly broken wide and that the bag's contents was pouring out. The ship began to drop more rapidly.

"I'll go overboard, mates," shouted Dick. "Maybe that'll lighten the car so the two of you can reach land. It's only a small swim."

In a flash, Ferral had flung himself into the water. But the loss of his weight did not help—the air ship was losing gas too fast for that.

"Over with you, Carl!" cried Matt. "It won't be hard for you to get ashore."

Matt wanted to get the air ship to dry land, but it was apparent to him that this was impossible.

The Hawk was doomed! As quickly as he could, Matt made ready to follow Carl and Dick.

Standing on the rail and clinging to one of the ropes by which the car was suspended from the bag, Matt paused for a second and then flung himself outward and downward.

Coming up, he shook the water from his eyes and began swimming. Dick had already dropped his feet on the bottom and was wading ashore. Carl, spluttering and floundering, was just ahead of Matt.

Dick's eyes were on the air ship. Something about the Hawk was claiming his attention.

Matt, swerving his gaze in the direction of the air ship, was surprised to see her still hanging in the air with the wind slowly wafting her shoreward. For a moment Matt was puzzled, then it flashed over him that there was enough gas in the upper point of the cigar-shaped envelope to keep the empty car and the bag out of the water.

Matt gained the shore and sank down on the sand beside Dick and Carl.

"How do you explain that, matey?" queried Dick.

"Why," answered Matt, "there's enough gas in the point of the bag, above the hole, to keep the fabric aloft. Had we stayed in the car we'd have brought the air ship down into the water. I was afraid the Hawk was lost to us, but now we'll be able to save her, and without injury to the motor. When she gets close enough, we'll catch hold of the car and pull her down."

"Vat good vill it do to safe der air ship, Matt?" asked Carl, lugubriously. "Meppy ve could patch oop der hole, but vere ve going to ged some more gas to fill der pag oop again?"

"We can't get away from this island in the Hawk," returned Matt, "but some ship may come along and pick us up. In that event, we'll be able to take the Hawk away with us. We've got too much money wrapped up in that machine to leave it here on this island."

"Right-o!" exclaimed Dick. "Not only is the Hawk saving herself for us, but she's bringing ashore our supplies. And it's a cinch we're going to need those supplies, mates. I'm a Fiji if I think there's anything but turtles here to eat."

By that time the air ship had drifted over the beach. By running up the slope leading down to the

beach, the boys were able to grasp the lower end of the car, and they easily hauled it to the ground. This move caused most of the gas that still remained in the bag to escape, and the envelope flattened itself out in the sand, twisting and writhing as the last of the gas worked its way out.

"This is the end of our cruise in the Hawk," muttered Dick, staring gloomily at the useless air ship, "and if this tight little island hadn't bounced up right in front of us just when we needed it most, the cruise would have been the end of us, too. But there's no use overhauling our hard luck. We're here, and we're safe, and we'd be worse than cannibals not to be satisfied. Let's slant away for those palms, doff our wet gear and sit in the shade till the sun dries our clothes."

"A good idea," assented Matt. "After we get dried out we'll pitch some sort of a camp and try and run up a flag of distress on one of the palm trees. We could be a whole lot worse off than we are, pards."

"Anyway," grumbled Carl, while he was getting out of his clothes and spreading them in the sun to dry, "we don't findt dot Durdle Islandt, und ve von't efer know vedder dere iss a iron chest on der islandt or nod."

"Fiend take the iron chest!" grunted Dick.

"You don'd care nodding for dot?" queried Carl, mildly surprised.

"Not a hap'orth. The time has come, Carl, when Motor Matt and his mates have got to look out for Number One. Maskee! If we're hung up on this two-by-twice turtle-back for long, the five thousand we're to get from Townsend won't be a whack-up to what we're losing in Atlantic City. It's a fair bad break we made, coming off on this jamboree. We wouldn't have done it if it hadn't been Townsend that asked us."

"That's the plain truth of it, Dick," said Matt. "Townsend had a claim on us and we were in duty bound to help him."

Carl, in his eagerness to be looking around the island, got into his clothes before they were fairly dry. Leaving Matt and Dick to talk, the Dutch boy ambled away and was quickly out of sight over the knoll that formed the backbone of the island.

"This looks like a case of where the wrong triumphs over the right," observed Dick. "Jurgens, who's a swab and a crook from heels to sky-piece, puts as brazen a piece of work as I ever heard of right over the plate. And it seems as though he was going to score, at that."

"He'll get his come-up-with before long," declared Matt. "That sort of crookedness may win for a little while, but it's bound to lose out in the long run."

"Where Townsend missed it was in not letting the authorities send Jurgens up that time he crawled into Townsend's office and was caught red-handed going through his desk. If Townsend had done what he ought to then, there'd have been no trouble like this now. Sometimes it's bad policy to be too easy with——"

A loud yell came floating over the top of the sandy ridge.

Both Matt and Dick sprang excitedly to their feet.

"Carl!" exclaimed Dick.

"Sounds like he was in trouble," cried Matt. "Come on and let's see what's up."

CHAPTER XII.

LUCK—OR ILL-LUCK?

When Matt and Dick reached the top of the ridge they could see their Dutch chum prancing around on the beach. He was on the side of the island directly across from the cove, and the object, whatever it was, that claimed his attention seemed to be lying in the sand.

"Look, vonce!" he bawled. "Come here kevick und see vat I haf foundt!"

Full of wonder, Matt and Dick raced down the slope.

"What is it, Carl?" demanded Matt.

"Footprints," cried Carl, "yah, so helup me! Vat you t'ink oof dot?"

Carl was right. There were footprints in the damp sand, together with other marks, which proved that a boat had grounded and been drawn up on the shore.

"Some one has paid this island a visit," said Matt, "and not very long ago."

"No doubt of it," averred Dick. "That boat must have put in here some time yesterday. Where did the men come from and where did they go?"

He tried to follow the footprints up the knoll, but they faded out before he had got half a dozen yards from the edge of the water.

"There were three men," said Matt, studying the marks, "and they landed, stayed a little while, and then shoved off again."

"But what did they stay for?" queried Dick; "what brought them here?"

"That's something we don't know, but the fact that the island has been visited seems to prove that it lies in the track of ships trading among the other islands. We'll get a white flag well up toward the top of one of those palm trees as soon as we can. Did you find anything else on the island, Carl?"

"Nod a t'ing," replied Carl. "I valked all aroundt it, und it ditn't dake more as fife minids to do it. Sooch a leedle islandt you nefer see. Led's ged oop der flag, for der kevicker vat somepody sees it, und dakes us off, der pedder vat I shall like it. I couldn't findt some cafes, neider."

"You were looking for a cave, eh?" asked Dick.

"Yah, so. I t'ought meppy dis mighdt be Durtle Islandt afder all, aber oof it iss, it don'd got any cafes."

"This island is too far north to be the one Townsend told us about, Carl," said Matt.

"I haf made oop my mindt about dot," returned Carl, as he followed Matt and Dick back up the knoll, "und I don'd t'ink dere iss any Durtle Islandt, or iron chest, or nodding. It vas all a foolishness und some bipe treams."

Matt and Dick put on their clothes and set about the work of putting up their distress signal.

From the canvas shelter which Matt had made for the Hawk a long streamer was cut. Thereupon Dick climbed the palm and tied the flag to it just under its tufted top. As the breeze opened the flag out, the boys stood off and surveyed it with a good deal of satisfaction.

"If any ships pass this island, and those aboard can see the palms," declared Dick, "they're bound to see that flag; then, if they're human, they'll send a boat ashore to investigate."

"If anything can help us," returned Matt, "that will. It's about all we can do, anyhow. Come on, now, and let's get something to eat. After that, you fellows can fix up a camp while I begin taking the car of the Hawk apart and making it ready for removal from the island."

The water cask was nearly full, which was a fortunate thing, considering that there did not appear to be a drop of fresh water anywhere on the island. The boys ate and drank sparingly, intending to husband their supplies so that thirst and starvation might not stare them in the face if their stay on the island was prolonged beyond the time they hoped and expected.

Following the meal, Carl and Dick took the canvas shelter designed for the Hawk and a coil of rope and made their way to the palm trees. Matt, opening the tool box in the car of the air ship, secured a wrench and set about taking the car apart.

Although he worked rapidly, it was dusk before he had finished his work. But the work had been well done. The motor had been taken out, the car had been divided into its various sections, the cordage had been neatly coiled, and the silken envelope had been carefully folded and bound with ropes into a compact bundle.

Another scanty meal was indulged in by the chums, and then all three made their way to the palms and crawled into the makeshift tent which Carl and Dick had constructed between two of the trees.

The events of the day had been exciting and all three of the boys were completely fagged.

"Great Bahama Island can't be very far from here, mate," said Dick, as he settled himself down on the warm sand. "Those men that landed in that boat may have come from there."

"It doesn't make much difference where the people come from, Dick," answered Matt, "so long as they find us. I haven't any desire to be hung up here for two or three weeks. We've got food and water enough to last us for six or seven days, if we use it sparingly, but after that there's no telling how we'd get along."

"Oof dere vas some pread-fruit trees," struck in Carl, drowsily, "und a shpring oof fresh vater, it would be easy enough to ged along."

"There goes Carl with his bread-fruit again," laughed Dick. "But I don't think we'll have to worry much over the chuck question. There'll certainly be a boat along before the week is up."

"I vonder vat Downsent vill t'ink ven he don'd see us coming pack like vat he expects?" said Carl. "He vill feel pooty pad mit himseluf, I bed you, oof ve don'd show oop in a few tays."

"He's certainly fallen afoul of some mighty tough luck," went on Dick. "He must have been working for several years on the *Grampus*, and he no more than gets her finished when along comes Jurgens with his gang and cuts her out. But, as I said, Townsend could have saved himself all this trouble if he had jugged Jurgens the time the fellow was found going through his desk."

"All that isn't worrying me so much," said Matt, "as the trouble we had with the Hawk. I'm through making ocean voyages in air ships. They're all right on the land, but when you take them out over a big stretch of water you're running too heavy a risk. And we got to this island by the skin of our teeth, Dick. If it had been a little farther off we'd never have made it."

"I wouldn't have given the fag end o' nothing, one while, for our chances of getting out of that fix alive. But fate is always springing surprises on a fellow. I'm beginning to think with Carl, Matt, that you can't dodge your luck, no matter what you do. But, tell me, what did you think of Townsend's boat? You were aboard her for a while and must have found out something about the craft."

"I know the *Grampus* has a strong steel room under her deck," said Matt, "and that she has an arrangement for firing torpedoes. Apart from that I know very little about the boat. I'd like to have a chance to take my time and examine her, but that opportunity, I suppose, will never come my way."

Carl had ceased to take a part in the conversation, and his snores were echoing through the tent. Matt and Dick presently fell asleep also, and when Matt awoke he found some one shaking him.

He opened his eyes and sat up.

"That you, Dick?" he asked, astonished to find that it was daylight.

"Aye, aye, messmate," replied Ferral, "it's Dick, all right enough. Come out of the tent—I've a surprise for you."

"What is it?" asked Matt, getting to his feet; "good luck or bad?"

"That's hard to tell, offhand. Come out and see for yourself. All I can say is, you're going to find something you didn't expect."

Dick's excited manner, and his veiled hints, aroused Matt's curiosity. Following Dick out of the tent, Matt swept his gaze in the direction of his chum's pointing finger.

The next instant Matt gave a startled jump.

"The *Grampus*!" he muttered, dazedly, rubbing his eyes and staring again.

There could be no mistake. In the cove, and close ashore, could be seen the rounded deck of a submarine. The conning tower was clear of the water, and on its curved side was painted in unmistakable letters the word, "*Grampus*."

But where had the boat come from? And what was she doing there?

"Get Carl," Matt whispered, "and duck over the ridge out of sight. I'll join you in a minute."

Without waiting for Dick to answer, Matt turned and sped toward the place where he had left the piled fragments of the air ship.

A box of supplies stood near the gasoline motor. Opening the box, Matt removed the two revolvers and the box of cartridges. Slipping the cartridges into his pocket, he leaped to the top of the ridge, dodged over it, and then made his way along the opposite side toward the place where Dick and Carl were waiting for him.

The presence of the *Grampus* in the cove might mean either good luck, or ill, for the castaways; but if good luck could be helped any by energetic measures, Matt was determined to turn the call of the submarine at the island to the advantage of himself and his friends.

Coming close to the spot where Dick and Carl were kneeling and peering excitedly over the ridge, Matt knelt down beside them and likewise began to watch.

The *Grampus* was in those waters for a purpose; and the only way to discover what that mission was, was by keeping track of Jurgens and his men.

CHAPTER XIII.

A MOVE AND A COUNTERMOVE.

"When did you first see the *Grampus*, Dick?" asked Matt, still watching for some sign of life about the submarine.

"She came up about a minute before I called you," replied Dick. "I awoke, saw the sun shining, and stepped out of the tent. About the first thing my eyes rested on, when they turned toward the cove, was that red ball on top of the staff. The submarine wasn't in sight, but that red ball was just awash and moving toward the shore. I hadn't a notion what it could be, and as I stood and looked the ball rose out of the water. Then the *Grampus* shoved her wet deck into sight, and I made a jump for the tent to get you."

The red ball to which Dick referred was fastened to the end of a staff that was planted in the submarine's deck. Matt was equally at a loss to understand what use the ball could possibly serve.

"Meppy," said Carl, who was always ready with a theory of his own, "der pall is to schare away der sharks. But for vy has der *Grampus* come here ven she iss due at Durtle Islandt? Has somet'ing gone wrong mit Jurgens' galguladions?"

At that moment the top of the conning tower was pushed upward, and the head of Jurgens appeared over the rim. The head rose until Jurgens was half out of the tower. The boys could see that he was curious about the tent under the palm trees. He would lift his eyes to the fluttering white flag, and then he would drop them to the tent. Finally Jurgens got out on the submarine's deck.

"Whistler!" the boys heard him call.

A moment later Whistler showed himself. He likewise surveyed the camp of the castaways. After that he and Jurgens talked together, but their voices were pitched in too low a key to carry to the

ridge.

At last Jurgens and Whistler gave over their talk. Jurgens began climbing down a ladder over the forward end of the boat, and Whistler got out of the tower and pushed after him.

The bow of the *Grampus* had grounded on the bottom. Jurgens, stepping from the ladder in water waist-deep, began wading ashore. Once on the beach, he waited for Whistler to join him.

"They're going to investigate our camp," whispered Matt.

"Oof dey come near enough to investigate us," returned Carl, "den, py shinks, ve vill put dem bot' outd oof pitzness." [Pg 22]

"Why not lay them by the heels, matey?" queried Dick, excitedly. "There are three of us and only two of them, and we've got a couple of guns. We could do it easy."

"It's their move," answered Matt, "and if we could make a countermove that would help us get hold of the *Grampus*, we would not only do a good stroke of work for Townsend, but for ourselves, into the bargain. The *Grampus* could take us away from here—to Turtle Island, if we wanted to go there—and then to Palm Beach."

As Matt went over the possibilities that followed in the wake of a successful attack on the *Grampus*, his brain fired with a resolve to carry out a countermove, even if he and his chums had to take some risks in order to do it.

"Jurgens is going into the tent," whispered Dick, "and Whistler is moving in the direction of the Hawk. He's not able to recognize the air ship, taken to pieces as she is."

"Right here's our chance," murmured Matt. "Follow me, both of you, and come quietly. Dick, you take this revolver. No noise, now, for everything depends upon the care we exercise in making this part of our countermove."

Jurgens was already so close to the tent that the canvas walls were between him and that part of the ridge where the boys were hiding. Whistler was walking directly away from the palm trees, so that his back was turned to the boys.

Matt crawled over the top of the ridge, then got to his feet and glided noiselessly toward the nearest wall of the tent. He could hear Jurgens poking around inside, and could even follow his movements as his head and shoulders brushed against the sloping canvas.

Dropping to his knees, Matt quickly lifted the lower edge of the canvas and rolled inside. Jurgens was passing that spot, at the moment, and Matt kept on rolling. His body struck against Jurgens' legs with sufficient force to overturn him. He gave a yell as he dropped, but the next moment his frantic shouts were stifled by Carl and Dick, who, by that time, had also pushed under the bottom of the tent.

"Hold him tight," whispered Matt, posting himself at the tent opening. "Here comes Whistler, and we've got to have him, too. You take care of Jurgens and I'll look after Whistler."

Matt had hardly finished speaking before Whistler rushed into the tent. He carried a revolver in one hand, and Matt, with a quick blow, dashed the weapon from his fingers. Whistler started back with an oath, only to find the muzzle of a six-shooter staring him in the face.

"Steady!" snapped Matt. "Try to yell, or to run away, and it will be the worse for you. Down on the ground, Whistler—face down!"

"What are you tryin' to——"

"Down, I tell you!"

The weapon almost touched Whistler's face. His gaze traveled along the barrel to the keen gray eyes back of it, and he dropped to his knees and sprawled forward at full length. As he did so, he made an attempt to grasp the weapon Matt had struck from his hand, and which was still lying on the sand.

But Carl was near enough to grab it away.

"No, you don'd," growled Carl, "nod as anypody knows of. Lay dere, und lay keviet. Vat's der next t'ing, Matt?"

"Go for a rope, Carl," answered Matt; "better get two ropes."

"Dot's me," and Carl sprang up and raced off toward the place where the different parts of the Hawk were piled.

He was back in a minute. Then, while Matt held Whistler under the point of the six-shooter, and Dick did the same by Jurgens, Carl tied the hands of each at his back, and used the free end of the rope to bind each prisoner's feet at the ankles.

"Now," proceeded Matt, "gag each of them. We can't have any yelling while we're doing the rest of our work."

Dick cut two strips of canvas from the tent wall, and these were tightly bound between the prisoner's teeth.

"How vas dot?" exulted Carl, standing over the prisoners when they had been bound and gagged. "You vill sic some more dogs on me, vill you, Churgens? Vell, I don'd t'ink! You ditn't make mooch ven you grabbed dot baper of Downsent's und run off mit it, hey?"

"We've no time for useless talk, Carl," spoke up Matt, sharply. "Only part of our work is done—"

the smallest part; the biggest thing of all lies ahead of us."

"What's that, matey?" queried Ferral.

"The recapture of the *Grampus*."

Matt was cool enough, but his words were startling.

"How can ve do dot?" returned Carl.

"By boarding the submarine and getting busy," Matt replied.

"Jurgens must have several men there, Matt," said Dick.

"They're probably looking after Townsend's three men. If we can release Cassidy, Burke and Harris, our force will be plenty large enough to take care of this gang of ruffians."

Although it was impossible for either Jurgens or Whistler to move or speak, yet they could hear well enough, and the work Matt was suggesting to his friends caused them to mumble behind their gags and to writhe about angrily.

"If we win," went on Matt, briskly, "we've got to hurry. Come on, pards," and he flung out of the tent and raced down the beach.

There was no one in sight about the *Grampus*. The cover of the conning tower was still pushed back, but it was clear to Matt and his chums that the rest of Jurgens' men were busy below.

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Quickly, and with as little noise as possible, Matt, Dick and Carl waded out to the *Grampus*. Matt was first to reach the ladder at the bow, and he swung up it lightly, crossed the deck and climbed into the conning tower.

An iron ladder afforded him means for descent into the hull of the boat, and the lunettes, or little windows, in the sides of the tower lighted his way downward.

At the bottom of the ladder he stepped into a steel chamber. The only articles of furniture in the chamber were a table and a chair. The top of the table was covered with a black hood which fell downward from the ceiling. Just then Matt had no time for investigating things he did not understand.

As he stood for a moment at the foot of the ladder, trying to hear something that would give him a clue as to where he should go, a door suddenly opened behind him. He whirled about, but before he could make a move to protect himself a heavy fist leaped out at him. He dodged to one side, but the blow caught him in the shoulder, whirled him half around and drove him with stunning force against the steel wall.

Taken at a disadvantage, as he had been, Matt would have paid dearly for his daring work had not Ferral, at that instant, dropped from the conning tower squarely upon the head and shoulders of the man who had made the attack on Matt.

The weight of Dick's body hurled the fellow to the floor, and before he could recover his wits Dick had snatched from his fingers a knife which he had pulled from the breast of his coat.

"Avast, there, you swab!" threatened Dick, waving his revolver in front of the scoundrel's face. "Are you hurt, Matt?" he added, keeping his eyes on the man, but addressing his chum.

"Shaken up a little, Dick, that's all," Matt answered; "but it might have been a whole lot worse if you hadn't dropped in on us. Where's Carl?"

"He's coming."

"How many men did Jurgens leave on this boat?" Matt asked, bending over the man on the floor.

"More'n you kin handle," was the surly response.

"We'll see about that. Keep him there, Dick, while I go forward and see what I can find."

Passing through the open door in which the man had appeared so suddenly, Matt found himself in the passage along which he and Holcomb had been led to the torpedo room in the bow. Matt was not going to the torpedo room just then, for he had begun to wonder whether Cassidy, Burke, and Harris might not be confined in the steel chamber where he and Holcomb had been placed on being brought aboard the *Grampus*.

Whirling to the left, he made in the direction of the chamber.

CHAPTER XIV.

MOTOR MATT'S SUCCESS.

The door to the steel chamber, as Matt remembered it, opened directly off the end of the narrow passage. The corridor was lighted with a couple of incandescent lamps so that Matt had no trouble in seeing what he was about.

Just as he laid his hand on the door Carl came into the passage. Matt turned to his chum, laid a finger on his lips in token of silence, and beckoned him to come close.

Just as Carl drew near Matt pushed open the door. Instantly there was a rush of feet and the young motorist was thrown heavily back against the Dutch boy. They both went down together on

the steel floor; and, at the same moment, the electric lights faded out, leaving the corridor in darkness.

Only one man had rushed from the room at the end of the passage—of that Matt was positive. Where he had gone Matt did not know, but as soon as he could extricate himself from his entanglement with his Dutch pard the young motorist pushed on through the darkness and entered the chamber.

"Vere you vas, Matt?" called Carl, stumbling along the corridor. "It vas so tark I don'd peen aple to see my handt behind my pack. Vich vay dit you go?"

"This way, Carl," shouted Matt.

"Vere iss der feller vat knocked us down?"

"I don't know, but it's a cinch that he's somewhere in the boat. He can't get away without passing through the room where Dick is, and, if he tries that——"

Matt broke off his words with an exclamation. He had stumbled over something on the floor.

Going down on his knees he groped over the object with his hands and discovered that it was the form of a man, as helplessly bound and gagged as were Jurgens and Whistler, in the tent on the island, at that moment.

With his hands Matt twisted the gag from the man's lips.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"Cassidy's my name," was the breathless answer; "and who are you?"

"Motor Matt."

"Great hullabaloo!" muttered Cassidy. "How'd you get here?"

"There's too much of it to tell, just now. Where are Burke and Harris, Cassidy?"

"Right here alongside o' me. We've been trussed up like this for a day an' two nights, an' my legs an' arms feel like they was paralyzed. Is Nemo, Jr., with you, Motor Matt?"

"No—only my two pards, Dick Ferral and Carl Pretzel. Jurgens and Whistler are captured, and we left them tied up, on the island."

"You never!" gasped Cassidy.

"That's the way of it," answered Matt. "How——"

"Well, if I ain't clean beat I don't want a cent. How'd you ever manage to do it?"

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"How am I to get the lights turned on, Cassidy? I'd like to see what I'm doing."

"I could tell you how to turn on the lights, Motor Matt, but you'd be somethin' of a spell finding the place in the dark. Better cut me loose and leave that part of it to me. I'll snap on the lights while you're freein' Burke and Harris."

This advice seemed sound, and Matt used his knife carefully on the ropes that secured Cassidy's wrists and ankles.

He could hear Cassidy getting up, and his exclamation of relief was loud and hearty.

"Now, by thunder," growled Cassidy, "we're havin' our innings. I reckon Jurgens'll find that his high-handed game o' his ain't all one-sided. I'll go turn on the lights, Motor Matt," and Cassidy could be heard leaving the room and passing into the corridor.

Matt and Carl groped about until they had found the other two prisoners, and while they were freeing them the lights were suddenly turned on.

"I'm Burke," said one of the men.

"Harris, that's me," said the other.

"How many men did Jurgens have on the submarine with him?" asked Matt.

"The' was four of 'em," replied Harris, standing erect and rubbing his cramped limbs. "The three that come first an' pulled the wool over Cassidy's eyes with that letter, an' then Whistler. That's all of 'em, Motor Matt."

"Jurgens and Whistler have been captured," went on Matt, "and one of my friends has another in the room below the conning tower. That leaves two more. Have you any idea where they are?"

This question was answered by a terrific clamor from some point in the forward part of the ship. Above the noise broke the sudden report of a revolver, echoing loudly between the steel decks and bulkheads.

"Here they are, men!" came the voice of Cassidy, husky and breathless as though he was fighting. "Here's t'other two of 'em in the torpedo room, tryin' ter get out the bow port."

"The torpedo room!" shouted Burke.

"Hike for the torpedo room!" roared Harris.

The two men flung past Matt and Carl and raced along the corridor.

"I guess there are enough of them to capture the two remaining members of the gang, Carl," said Matt. "Pick up some of those ropes and we'll go and put them on the fellow Dick is standing guard over."

"Dot's me!" boomed Carl, gathering up the ropes and hurrying after Matt.

They found that Dick still had his prisoner safely in hand.

"He nearly slipped his hawse, though," said Dick, "when the lights went out, but I hung to him until the lights were turned on again. Did you find Cassidy, Burke and Harris, Matt?"

"Yes," answered Matt. "They were in the same room where Holcomb and I were put when Jurgens brought us aboard the *Grampus*. We've released the three of them and they are now making prisoners of the two last members of Jurgens' gang. They're fighting in the torpedo room."

"Glory!" cried Ferral. "If any one had told me we could have done this, I wouldn't have believed it. It's the biggest thing we've yet passed to our credit, matey."

"Well, before we congratulate ourselves too much, suppose we make sure of the prisoners we have? Get the ropes on that fellow, Dick, and then you and Carl drag him to the room from which we just took Cassidy, Burke and Harris. I'm going to the torpedo room and see how matters are progressing."

While Carl and Dick were busy with their prisoner, Matt made his way forward along the passage to the torpedo room. When he opened the door and stepped into the place he found that the scrimmage was all over. Cassidy, Burke and Harris had captured the two men and were busy making them secure. Leaving the work to Burke and Harris, Cassidy arose to his feet and stepped close to Matt.

"Your hand, youngster!" said he, cordially, reaching out one of his paws. "You've turned a big thing—I don't know how big, nor how you done it, but I reckon all that'll come out afore long. These fellers," and here Cassidy waved an angry hand toward the two prisoners, "was two of the three that breezed up to me on the wharf at the Inlet an' flashed a letter that claimed to be from Nemo, Jr. The letter informed me that the three men had been hired for part o' the crew o' the *Grampus*, an' that they was to come aboard and I was to show 'em the ropes. Well, they got me. I ain't overly good at reading writin', but I managed to make out what that letter said an' didn't have sense enough to know it wasn't writ by the cap'n's hand.

"Them three Injuns come aboard. I took one of 'em to show him the ropes, Burke took another, and Harris took the third. The same thing that happened to Harris an' Burke likewise happened to me. When I wasn't lookin', the gent I was conductin' around an' explainin' things to rapped me over the skull from behind. When I come to I was in the torpedo room, along with Burke an' Harris. Bymby we was took out o' here into the periscope room, an' from there into the foc'sle, which ain't a foc'sle at all in the original meanin' o' the word, but which we calls that on account o' it's bein' sleepin' quarters fer the hands.

"A little later the *Grampus* got under headway, an' then I was waited on by Whistler an' conducted to the motor at the p'int of a gun an' told to keep the motor goin' and obey orders. There wasn't anything else for me to do. The boat was in the hands of the enemy. Jurgens had got the best of the old man, an' I knowed what Jurgens' game was.

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"One of Jurgens' men watched me handlin' the motor, an' finally made out to take it hisself. Then, when that happened, I was taken back to the foc'sle an' the lashings was put onto me again. Bymby, Harris and Burke was brought in an' treated in the same way. Like me, they had learned some o' Jurgens' men how to do the work on the *Grampus*, an' we was sidetracked because we wasn't needed an' couldn't be trusted."

"How did Jurgens come to stop at this island?" Matt asked.

"He seen the white flag an' got curious."

"How did he see the flag if the *Grampus* was under water?"

"Through the periscope."

"Is that red ball on top of the staff the periscope?"

"It's part of it. Jurgens seen the flag through that, an' bein' of a cur'ous disposition he put in to investigate. Three of the gang was left to look after Burke, Harris an' me, an' Jurgens an' Whistler went ashore. Now, son, you can open up an' explain how you happened to be on the island, an' how you managed to capture Jurgens an' Whistler, so——"

"I think you'd better go ashore and get Jurgens and Whistler, Cassidy," interrupted Matt. "If we left them there too long they might succeed in getting away. You'll find them in a makeshift tent, by the three palm trees."

"We'll get 'em, Matt, but fust off we'll carry these two fellers to the foc'sle. Drag 'em along, Burke, you an' Harris," Cassidy added to his mates.

The men were dragged to the steel chamber and thrown into it to keep Ferral's prisoner company. This done, Cassidy, Burke and Harris climbed out of the conning tower, descended the ladder and went ashore.

CHAPTER XV.

A FEW SURPRISES.

There were a few surprises in store for Motor Matt and his friends. The first one was sprung when Cassidy, shouting loudly from the beach, called Matt to the top of the conning tower and reported that there was no one in the makeshift tent.

Matt was dumbfounded for a moment.

"Jurgens and Whistler were there," he asserted. "We left them tied hand and foot and gagged when we came out to the *Grampus*. If they're not in the tent, Cassidy, then they must have freed themselves and gone off somewhere on the island. The island isn't so big but what you can find them."

"They're not on the island," asserted Cassidy. "We've combed it from end to end, an' we're ready to swear there ain't a livin' soul on the island but us three."

"It couldn't be that a boat has put in and taken them off, Cassidy," went on Matt. "No boat would have had time to do that. You'll certainly find them on the island if you look sharp."

Cassidy and his mates took another turn about the island, but with no better success. Jurgens and Whistler had mysteriously disappeared.

Giving up trying to locate the missing scoundrels, Matt had Cassidy, Burke and Harris tote the various parts of the air ship out to the *Grampus*. Some of the parts were loaded inside the boat, and the rest—too large to come down the hatch in the conning tower—were roped to the rounded deck.

This method of loading made it necessary for the *Grampus* to keep on the surface of the water all the way to Palm Beach. Matt, however, had another plan in mind before going to Palm Beach, and as soon as the Hawk had been safely loaded he had a talk with Cassidy in the periscope room and led up to his plan. The result was another surprise for the three chums—one that was well-nigh overwhelming.

"I suppose you know, Cassidy," observed Matt, "why Jurgens stole the *Grampus*?"

Cassidy cocked up his eyes shrewdly at Matt.

"I know," said he, "but I don't reckon any one else does, exceptin' Cap'n Nemo, Jr., hisself."

"That's where you're mistaken, Cassidy," returned Matt. "Captain Nemo, Jr., or Mr. Townsend, as we have come to call him, told me and my pards all about it."

"Then I reckon that's the fust time he ever let the thing out."

"He had to tell us," went on Matt, "because he wanted to use our air ship in order to get to Turtle Key. With the Hawk, Townsend thought he could reach the Key before the *Grampus* got there, and that we could then lie in wait for Jurgens and his men."

From this point, Matt rehearsed the adventures that had overtaken him and his chums and Townsend, bringing the recital down to the point where Jurgens and Whistler had been captured, and the attack made on the submarine.

Cassidy, Burke and Harris listened to the story with intense interest. When Matt was through, exclamations of wonder and surprise went up from the three men.

"Never heard of anythin' like that, dashed if I have!" averred Harris.

"Sounds like a fish story," asserted Burke, "only it has the facts to bear it out."

"You lads have gone through a lot for Cap'n Nemo, Jr.," said Cassidy, "an' you've not only done a lot for him, but you've likewise done a little somethin' for us fellers."

"How's that?" asked Matt.

"I'm purty sure Jurgens was plannin' to maroon us on the island, here. He an' his men had found out from us all they wanted to know about runnin' the ship, an' so, havin' no use for us, they wouldn't bother to keep us around. Yes, I'm sartain they was goin' to turn us adrift on the island; but you an' your mates, Motor Matt, saved us from that."

"Of course," said Matt, "we've got to go back to Palm Beach."

"Nacherly," agreed Cassidy, "if the old man is there. We'll take him, busted ankle an' all, into the *Grampus* an' snatch him back to Philadelphia, or wherever else he wants to go."

"Before we do that," said Matt, "why can't we finish up this work for him?"

"I don't savvy what you mean," said Cassidy. "Ain't the work about all finished? You've got the boat back for him, an'—"

"But why not find Turtle Key, look into that cave and then go back able to report to him that there's no iron chest on the island."

The eyes of all three of the men grew wide as they surveyed Matt.

"Great sandpipers!" exclaimed Cassidy, "didn't you hear about that? I supposed you knowed."

"Supposed I knew what?" demanded Matt.

"Why, about that iron chest."

"What about it?"

"You come with me, son," and Cassidy reached for Matt's arm and led him out of the periscope

room and into the corridor.

Halfway along the passage was a door leading off to the right. Cassidy opened this door, revealing a closet-like room with a box in its centre. On the box rested an ancient appearing iron chest, some twelve inches long and twelve inches square.

"What's that?" asked Matt.

"Can't ye tell by lookin' at it?" cried Cassidy. "Why, that's the iron chest that all this pother has been about."

"I knowed dot!" breathed Carl, from behind Matt, "I hat some feelings in my pones dot dere vas a chest like vat der baper say."

"Where did the chest come from?" continued Matt.

"From the cave on Turtle Key," explained Cassidy. "Jurgens went there an' got it. We was on our way north ag'in when Jurgens sighted that white flag o' your'n through the periscope an' put in at the island to investigate."

Cassidy laughed.

"Ye can see what that investigation cost him," he finished. "He lost the *Grampus*, and the iron chest. Motor Matt and his mates, by recapturin' the *Grampus*, got the hull bag o' tricks for the old man. Mebby he won't be tickled!"

"Wished I was Motor Matt," sighed Burke. "The old man's rich, an' he's allers full o' gratitude when any one does anythin' fer him."

"He can't do anything more for me than what he's agreed to," declared Matt, "and that is to pay my pards and me five thousand for the use of the Hawk."

"Well," said Cassidy, "if that's how you stand we'll let it go at that; but hadn't we better be thinkin' of gettin' back to Palm Beach? Cap'n Nemo, Jr., 'll be lookin' fer ye, an' if you don't show up he'll be worryin'."

"We'll start at once," answered Matt. "All I was delaying for was to get you to go to Turtle Key after the iron chest. Now that it isn't necessary to go there, the quicker we get to Palm Beach, the better."

"Go to your stations, men," said Cassidy to Burke and Harris. "By the same token, I'll go to mine."

Cassidy dropped down below into a small room which contained the gasoline motor, Burke went away to some other part of the ship and Harris climbed into the conning tower. The top of the tower was lowered, and Harris, peering through the lunettes, began communicating the outlook to Cassidy by means of push-buttons.

The fabric of the submarine began to shake and quiver under the spur of the engine. Slowly she backed off the shallow bar where she had grounded, gained deep water, turned and started out into the open sea.

"The trip back to Palm Beach," Harris called down to Matt and his chums, "is to be made with the deck awash. If we was to submerge the *Grampus*, I'd have to give Cassidy his orders by means of the periscope. There's push-buttons along the edge of the table, an' I can communicate with the engine room from there just as well as from up here."

Matt pushed his head under the black hood of the periscope. The top of the table he found to be a mirror, and upon it was reflected the surface of the sea from the *Grampus* as a focal point clear out to the horizon's edge.

"This is a fine craft," spoke up Ferral, who had been strolling through the submarine. "That Captain Nemo, Jr., has surely got a head on him to be able to get up such a boat."

"I'm hoping, Dick," said Matt, "that we'll become better acquainted with the *Grampus*. Just now, though, I'd like to see if we can't get a little information out of the three men in the strong room."

Matt led the way to what Cassidy had called the "foc'sle," and the three boys were soon looking down on the scowling faces of the prisoners.

"You're the men who captured the *Grampus* in the Inlet at Atlantic City, are you?" queried Matt.

"Don't talk with him, men," said one of the prisoners sharply to the others. "Whatever you say he'll use against you. Jest remember that and keep mum."

"Did you go to Atlantic City with Jurgens' moving-picture outfit?" Matt went on.

"Mebby we did an' mebby we didn't," answered the fellow who had arrogated to himself the post of spokesman. "We ain't tellin' anything we know an' you ain't findin' anything out, see? Take a sneak and leave us alone. You've raised hob with us and that ought to satisfy you."

"Have you any idea what became of Jurgens and Whistler?" Matt went on. "We captured them and left them on the island, but they vanished mysteriously, leaving you three men to bear the consequences of the lawless work Jurgens set on foot."

"We don't know anything about where Jurgens an' Whistler have gone," replied the prisoner. "If they've fooled you, I'm mighty glad of it."

That was all the satisfaction Matt could get. The escape of Jurgens and Whistler was bothering him not a little, and it was past his comprehension how the two men could have made such a complete get-away from the island.

As they themselves were the only ones who could explain it, the manner in which the *coup* had been accomplished seemed likely to always remain a mystery.

The *Grampus* was five hours making the trip across Florida Straits. When she tied up off Palm Beach it was midnight, and Matt, Dick and Carl bunked aboard the craft and went ashore in the morning with Cassidy to pay their respects to Townsend.

CHAPTER XVI.

MATT TAKES TOWNSEND'S ADVICE.

Townsend was on the road to rapid recovery. He was feeling a hundred per cent. better than he had been when Matt and his pals left him, two days previously, and if it had been possible to use his lame foot he would have been up and around.

He was not surprised to see Motor Matt and his friends, because he had expected Matt to make the trip to Turtle Key and back in safety; but he was surprised to see Cassidy enter his room with the young motorist.

"What's this?" cried Townsend, hoisting up on his elbow and staring at Cassidy. "Is that you, Cassidy?"

"Big as life, cap'n," grinned Cassidy.

"Where'd you come from?"

"From the *Grampus*."

"And where's the *Grampus*?"

"Layin' off the town."

"Did you get her away from Jurgens?"

"Motor Matt was the one that got her away from Jurgens."

Townsend fell back on his pillow and centred his attention on Matt.

"There's a yarn back of all this, if I'm any prophet," said Townsend, "and for two days I've been hungry to have some one talk to me. Here's your chance, King."

Matt seated himself by the bedside and proceeded to relate the experiences through which he and his friends had recently passed.

Townsend listened with rapt interest. Not a word escaped him, and occasionally he asked a question to bring out some point which Matt had not made quite clear.

When Matt had finished there followed an interval of silence. Townsend did not seem to be greatly impressed, despite the intense interest he had shown while the narrative was going forward.

"Nothing so very wonderful about all that," said Townsend, presently, "when you consider who was playing the chief part in the game. It's just about what I should expect of Motor Matt. I'm sorry for the trouble you had with the air ship, Matt, and shall consider myself under obligations to make up to you any extra expense you may incur in getting the Hawk back into shape. When I hired you to take me to Turtle Key I had no intention of allowing you to run the risk of losing the Hawk.

"And the Man from Cape Town told the truth, after all! I hadn't the least idea that there was a vestige of truth in that wild yarn of his. The iron chest has been found, but what we discover in the chest is liable to be another matter. I doubt if there is anything in it of any value; nevertheless, I am bound by promise to take the chest to New Orleans and open it in the presence of a certain lady there whose name was given me by the Unknown. It looks like a lot of foolishness, to me, but I've started the game and will have to go through with it. I'm very sorry," and here a heavy frown crossed Townsend's face, "that Jurgens got away from the island. The other men will be transferred from the *Grampus* to the jail, here, and they will be dealt with according to law, but it is the ringleader we ought to have. How do you think he managed to escape from that island, Matt?"

"He must have got away in a boat," replied Matt, "although where Jurgens and Whistler got the boat is something of a puzzle."

"Well, the two scoundrels have gone, and justice will be cheated for a while longer; but, mark me, sooner or later their time will come. And I have an idea, Matt, that you and I will be concerned, in some manner, with the final act of their vicious careers. What will you do now?"

"Repair the Hawk and go back to Atlantic City."

"Can you repair the Hawk here?"

"Easily."

"Then why go back to Atlantic City?"

Matt stared at Townsend.

"That's a good place to make money," said he, "and the Hawk has become quite popular at the resort."

"It won't be so popular from now on, mark what I say."

"Why not, Mr. Townsend?"

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"Why, because people will learn how the gas bag sprung a leak and nearly caused you and your friends to lose your lives. That is what will injure the Hawk's popularity. If you return to Atlantic City people will be afraid to make any ascensions with you. Can't you see how it will be?"

There seemed to be a good deal of logic in Townsend's remarks, although Matt thought he was a little too comprehensive in saying that *everybody* would be afraid of the Hawk.

"We'll show the people," declared Matt, "that the Hawk is perfectly safe."

"We can explain," put in Dick, "that we ran into a tree and made a hole in the bag. That ought to show people that the accident wasn't the Hawk's fault."

"It ought to," insisted Townsend, "but it won't. People don't stop to make any fine discriminations in such matters, and if an accident happened to the Hawk once, they will argue, it's liable to happen again. Now, I want to give you some advice, Matt, and if you follow it you will profit by it. Cassidy and I, together with Burke and Harris, are going to leave here this afternoon in the *Grampus* for New Orleans. I can be carried down to the boat, and I will feel a heap better in the *Grampus* than I will in this hotel. In two or three days we will be in New Orleans. While we are making the journey, you and your friends, Matt, will be here, getting the air ship in shape. My advice to you is this: Don't leave Palm Beach until you hear from me. I have a scheme floating around in my brain and I am going to telegraph you just as soon as it takes a little more form so I will know just what I want to do, and to have you do.

"That's my advice. Stay here until you get word from me. That's all I'm going to tell you, and you and your friends can take the advice, or leave it, just as you think best. But if you don't take it, you will live to regret it."

This was odd talk for Mr. Townsend. First he tried to discourage Matt and his friends from returning to Atlantic City, and now he was seeking to keep them in Palm Beach for an indefinite period.

But all the boys had confidence in Townsend. Each of them believed that he was planning something for their benefit, and they were disposed to do as he suggested.

Townsend took his departure from Palm Beach just as he said he would do. Bearing the iron chest with him, he took the *Grampus* and started for New Orleans.

Meanwhile, Matt and Carl and Dick got busy with the Hawk. The craft was put together again, the motor replaced, the envelope repaired, and in two days everything was in readiness for a return to Atlantic City—if the boys chose to go there.

"Vat do you subbose id iss dot Misder Downsent vants mit us?" asked Carl.

"Give it up, matey," answered Ferral. "I can't smoke his weather roll, but, all the same, I give him credit for meaning well."

"Shall we wait here any longer," inquired Matt, "or start back to Atlantic City? Time means money to us, you know, and the longer we wait, the more we lose—that is, if we don't intend to follow Mr. Townsend's advice."

"It's one too many for me, matey," said Ferral. "You're the longest-headed chap in the bunch, and suppose Carl and I leave the decision entirely with you?"

"If that's the way you feel," laughed Matt, "we'll stay right here and give Townsend all the chance he wants to communicate with us."

Two days after this conference, a telegram came from New Orleans. It was addressed to Matt, signed by Townsend, and read as follows:

"Come to New Orleans at once, and come in the Hawk. I need your aid, and am willing and able to pay for it."

"Dot's rightd to der point, und no misdake!" chuckled Carl. "'I vant your aid und am villing to pay for it.' Dere's no gedding aroundt dot, eh?"

"Hardly," laughed Ferral. "What are we going to do, Matt?"

"Do as the telegram says and start for New Orleans immediately," returned Matt.

"Iss dere any vay ve can go dere mitoudt trafeling ofer der ocean?" asked Carl, with signs of trepidation.

"Sure there is, Carl," said Ferral. "I wouldn't go myself if we had to travel across the Gulf of Mexico. But we don't have to. We can follow the land around."

The start was made that afternoon, and, although this following of Townsend's advice led Matt and his friends into experiences as novel as they were dangerous, yet none of them ever regretted taking the trip around the Gulf coast to the Crescent City.

THE END.

THE NEXT NUMBER (13) WILL CONTAIN

Motor Matt's Queer Find;

OR,

THE SECRET OF THE IRON CHEST.

The Hut by the Bayou—Yamousa—The Attack On the Car—Smoke-pictures—A Queer Find—Foul Play—Dried Frogs, and Luck—The Plotters—The Head of Obboney—On the Trail—A Black Mystery—At Close Quarters—Three in a Trap—An Astounding Situation—The Treasure—Diamonds Galore.

MOTOR STORIES

THRILLING ADVENTURE MOTOR FICTION

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NEW YORK, May 15, 1909.

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NIGHT WATCHES FOR BIG GAME.

From Sebenane to Thamasetse, both of which are pools of water situated on the old Hunter's road from Francistown to the Zambesi, is, roughly speaking, seventy-five miles. Since the railway has been opened up between Francistown and Buluwayo this road is never used, and is practically deserted. We had started very early in the morning. Just about sunrise I heard a rustle in a bush close to the road, writes Arnold W. Hodson in the *Field*. Thinking it was only a steinbuck or a duiker, I paid no attention till I heard the animal bound away, when it struck me as making rather a loud noise for so small an antelope. I then caught sight of a yellow object moving parallel to the road and saw it was a lioness.

She bounded into the road and stood looking at me. I had my thick gloves on, as it was very cold, and in consequence rather fumbled pulling off my night protector, which, to save time, I dropped on the road instead of putting into my pocket. My pony, however, began to pirouette round in circles, and before I could get him in hand the lioness bounded away. I galloped after her down the road, but she soon got into the thick bush, where we lost her.

We got to Thamasetse the next day and found old lion spoor, but none fresh. Some days afterward one of the bushmen appeared and reported that the lions were at Thamasetse. I got ready as soon as possible and left that evening with one native. We rode all through the night and arrived at our destination the next afternoon. The lions did not come down to drink till the third night, when in the morning we found their spoor still fresh and damp. We followed it up carefully, going through thorn bush.

We got so close to them once or twice that we could hear them growling (there were five altogether), but the wind changing, they smelled us and made off and although we followed them up for some distance we did not catch sight of them again. Eventually we had to give it up.

The following day we found the spoor of one male and one female, and followed them up for about twelve to fourteen miles. We would come to a place where they had been sleeping, and then, evidently smelling us, we would see how they had become uneasy and gone on a short distance, where they had slept again. This went on till we had gone too far and had to go back.

After this experience I decided to try different tactics, so we dug a hole fifteen yards from the water, in which I intended to watch that night. We made the hole as inconspicuous and secure as possible, and then went around to the outside pools and filled them all up, so that the lions, if they wanted to drink, would have to come down to our water. At sundown I took up my position in the kadiri (the native name for "game hole"). A few hours afterward some sable and roan antelopes came down to drink, and it was a very pretty sight to watch them.

They approach the water carefully and when quite close suddenly bound away. My opinion is that they do this to see if by chance there is a lion in the water hole, because the latter lie up close to the edge of the pool in the shadow of the bank and then spring on the game when it drinks. The mere fact of their bounding away would probably entice the lion forth. The sable antelope seemed to me to be always more cautious than the roan antelope. One of the former, a female, came twelve times to the water and dashed away each time. Of course she may have just smelled me, which would have accounted for it; but I do not think she did, for she eventually drank.

I kept watch night after night, and although I saw plenty of game, no lions came. It was very lonely by oneself in these holes, and the cries of the wolves and jackals are at times very uncanny. One evening at dinner time just as Ranchubu, my servant, was bringing in the soup, one of my little bushmen, a splendid little chap of about 14 and very plucky, who was going down to the water to fill his billy, suddenly commenced yelling with all his might "Newe! Newe!" (leopard, leopard), and then, still shouting, commenced running after it across the veld. I snatched up my rifle and calling to the dogs rushed after him. Luckily, I had on a pair of light running shoes instead of my usual heavy shooting boots, so was easily able to keep up with the others who had joined us.

We must have gone about three miles when we heard the dogs barking and knew that they had bayed the leopard. In a few minutes it would be quite dark, so I put on a fresh spurt to try to get a shot while I could see my sights. The leopard was standing outside a thick patch of bush with the dogs, furiously excited, surrounding him. After several shots and misses, the leopard breaking away each time, a lucky shot struck him in the neck and killed him.

I was glad the matter ended as it did, for I found that two of my previous shots had hit him, and it is seldom that a wounded leopard does not attack his assailant. It is curious that he did not take to a tree, as is nearly always the case when chased by dogs. He was an excellent specimen of a large male. We got back to the camp about 9 p. m., a very jubilant party, and when I had had my supper I again took up my position at the water hole. Plenty of game came that night, but no lions.

The next day was very hot and oppressive, and we felt sure that if lions were anywhere near they would come down that night to drink. I took up my position soon after sundown, and about 12 o'clock, as we had no meat, shot a male sable antelope. He was mortally wounded and ran about sixty yards to die, when, as I discovered, in the morning, he was pounced upon by a lioness and immediately killed. I heard nothing and saw nothing till about 3 a. m., when I heard lap, lap, lap from the pool in front of me.

I knew by the noise the beast was making it could be nothing else but a lion, but for the moment I could see nothing, as it was in the pool, and from the position I could only see an animal as it came in or went out. At last the noise stopped and a shadowy figure came out of the pool. It stood for an instant on the edge silhouetted against the sky. I could not distinguish whether it was a male or a female, but there was no doubt it was a lion, and, as it turned out afterward, a female. I brought my rifle in line with the object and fired. I knew at once I had hit by the terrific growls that followed. I hastily fired again and the brute lay down, all the time growling terribly, so much so that it woke up all the natives in my camp, some distance away.

As soon as it was light I could see her ears moving and fired again, this time hitting her just below the head, which finished the matter. She was a splendid specimen of a lioness. My first shot had hit her in the neck, and the second in the stomach. Her skin was perfect and very glossy. We found the remains of the sable antelope she had killed about eighty yards away, and saw by the spoor that there had been at least six lions around the pool that night.

They had evidently been frightened by the fate of the lioness and had not come down to drink. We followed the spoor of a lion and a lioness. After we had gone a short distance the bushman pointed to a tree and showed us where the lion had been standing up on his hind legs clawing it. He said that the lion was looking around for the lioness I had shot and was very angry at being disturbed from his feast of the sable antelope. We went on mile after mile, but a breeze springing up behind us we had to go back.

That night I again sat up at the water hole, but saw nothing more exciting than a few sable and roan antelopes. The next day it was again very hot, and at night I went down to the hole full of hope that the lions would come back. About 1 a. m. I heard a rustle and saw a leopard going into the pool, walking very quietly and without the least idea of my near presence. She disappeared into the pool, but I could not hear her drinking, as I had heard the lioness two nights before. She soon came out and stood for a few minutes on the bank; I fired and she bounded away. My bullet went through her body and she was found next morning a few yards distant. She was very prettily marked, in good condition.

About 3 a. m. the same morning I could hear some animals at the remains of the sable antelope. The cracking of the bones was one of the most horrible noises I have ever heard. I made sure that the lions had come back, and expected them when they had finished their feed to come down and drink; but they did not come, and in the morning we found that they were jackals that had been

eating the meat during the night.

I continued to sit up at nights, but the lions did not return. On the third evening just before going down to the game hole the leader came running into camp and said that he had heard the cries of a dying sable antelope, so we went out as quickly as possible to the place, and on getting near to it heard the peculiar half growl, half bark uttered by wild dogs. There were four or five of them. They did not run away when they saw us, but bounded a few yards and then turned round and looked at us, all the time making a hideous noise. I shot one of them and the rest then decamped. This wild dog appeared to me to be differently marked from one I had shot a few weeks before more to the southwest. These brutes do no end of damage among game, and the bushmen say that sometimes if they are disturbed in their orgies they will attack a man. They certainly look fierce enough to do so.

SPECIALISTS IN THE WOODS.

Only people who have poked around up there more or less realize how many persons make a living out of the Maine woods. This reference is not to the lumbermen and the pulp stuff choppers. Their presence in the woods is a matter of course. This is a word about the army of specialists. One might say that they are the gleaners who follow the red-shirted reapers whose harvest is the giants of the forests. The side issues of the Maine woods feed many mouths; and speaking about mouths there are, of course, the gum pickers.

Some people have an idea that spruce gum is gathered in the forest by the lumbermen at odd jobs. It may be remarked in passing that from 4:30 a. m. until dark the Maine loggers have something else to do. They haven't any hankering to climb trees.

Practically all the spruce gum of commerce is gathered by men who make it their business and work at it as steadily as a man in a factory. You will find the snowshoe trail of these busy chaps zigzagging through pathless stretches, and if you happen to be up that way you will see their camp-fires glowing deep in many a lonely glen.

Few people behold them at their work. The constant supply of gum in store windows shows they are kept busy.

There is more or less excitement about gum picking. The standard price for gum is \$1 a pound, and a fancy article of clear nuggets brings \$1.50. Some days when lucky strikes are frequent the gum picker can clear from \$5 to \$10.

The gum picker can sell even the scraps and chippings. The patent spruce gum maker boils those down. Several medicine firms also make a spruce gum cough balsam.

Maine gum pickers usually travel in pairs. Some go on their own hook, others are employed by wholesale druggists. Usually they range over wide territory, sleeping here and there in the deserted logging camps that sprinkle northern Maine. A few fresh boughs of browse in the bunks and some strips of bark over the habitable corner of the camp make the place a comfortable home.

If a city man happens to be ordered into the woods by his physician he would do well to take up gum picking for his pastime, even if he does not care for the money. There is just enough activity about it to keep a man's mind clear and his muscles healthy. It takes him abroad through the crisp winter air and gives him an excuse for "hucking it."

A gum picker's equipment comprises warm clothing, snowshoes, climbers—such as telegraph linemen use—a curved chisel in the handle of which a pole may be set, a good jack-knife and a gun. These are the necessaries.

Almost as necessary is a good supply of tobacco, for if you can imagine a gum picker sitting down of an evening by the camp fire and cleaning his day's pick of gum without clouds of smoke about his head your imagination pictures a very cheerless scene.

There is a special thing about gum picking—the daily expenses are small. The men cannot register at hotels or patronize saloons. It is either a deserted camp or the lee side of a tree at night.

As they are obliged to tote their household supplies on a moose sled, they are frugal in their diet. With plenty of work, a few bushels of beans, flour, and molasses, a gum picker is fixed nicely for a long and cold winter. He figures that it costs him about 50 cents a week, and if he is handy with his gun he reduces expenses materially.

Of course it is rather lonely sometimes in the deep woods, but there is a pretty bright side to the picture.

The gum picker rolls off his bunk in the morning, his nostrils full of the good green savor of the spruce boughs beneath his head all night. He fries his bacon, warms his beans and sloofs at his steaming tin of tea.

Then he has a leisurely smoke before the sputtering embers of the fire, gets his kit on his back and his gum bag under his arm, ties a lunch of biscuit and gingerbread in his handkerchief, straps on his snowshoes, and trudges away into the forest, his pipe trailing blue smoke behind in the sparkling air of the winter morning.

The gum picker must have a good eye for trees. A careless and myopic man would travel over acres of territory and miss the dollars right along. The shrewd picker, the experienced man, runs his practiced eye along every trunk.

Here and there he sees a tall spruce marked by a seam through which its life-blood has oozed for years. The bubbles have crept out and have been clarified day by day in the sun and the rain. They have absorbed the odoriferous breath of the forest.

There they are at last, amber and garnet nuggets, ready for the picker's chisel and for the teeth of the gum-chewing girls far away in the city. Sometimes the picker goes up on his climbers and taps and ticks and picks like a giant woodpecker. Sometimes the tree is felled.

The gum king of the Moosehead region is a rather cranky old chap, who has been at the business ever since he was a youth. He roams all over that region and has reduced the thing to a science.

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At regular intervals he makes a trip through some remote district and wounds the spruces with his ax and chisel. Then after a few years he travels around that way and gathers the gum.

It is only in Maine that the great gum nuggets with centres like the red of a dying coal are obtained, and the folks that chew gum say that for yanking qualities this gum beats the world.

The Maine hoop pole man makes even better wages than his brother the gum picker. The hoop pole man follows along in the wake of the loggers.

He barbers the face of the hillsides of stuff that no one else wants. He is after the second growth, as the young birch and ash are called. These spring up around the rotting stumps.

The hoop pole man takes a horse with him in his tours. He cuts the poles, and the horse hauls them to camp by daylight. Evenings the pole man fashions the hoops with a draw shave, sitting beside a roaring fire and sucking at his black pipe.

Sometimes the poles are sold round, but the harvester who trims his own stuff and shaves the hoops receives two or three cents each for the finished products, and that pays. The hoop pole business is pretty steady work, but the evenings are pleasant, after all, with the slish of shaves, the crackle of the fire and the rumble of story telling. Even the rabbit, up-ending outside, looks in through the windows at the light and warmth, waggles his ears and wishes he might join the group.

As soon as the hoop poles are sold each is marked across with red chalk a little way from the end. For some time in certain parts of Maine persons did a snug business by stealing poles, but nowadays no dealer will buy any that have been thus marked. Yet sometimes the canny thief cuts off the ends that bear the chalk mark.

A while ago one man sold his hoop poles to a dealer, who marked them and laid them in his sled. Then the seller came around by night, stole the poles, cut them off and sold them to another dealer as hoops for half barrels. It may be seen, therefore, that the city man doesn't know all the tricks. If this enterprising hoop pole man could have got the hoops once more he could have trimmed them down and disposed of them as hoops for nail kegs.

Then there is the axe handle man. He needs ash of a larger growth than the hoop pole saplings. The trees are chopped in the fall, and then by means of a "froe" and axe each handle is roughly blocked out. Then they are buried so that they may season without cracking.

As an additional precaution against parting of the fibres the broad end of each handle is daubed with a sort of paint the principal ingredient of which is grease. Ash goes to pieces easily if the sun gets at it and the axe handle man must be careful of his wares. The rough handles are sent away to the factory as soon as the snow comes.

Of all tough jobs the ship knee man has the worst in the woods. The knees bring good prices, but the man who gets them out earns every cent.

He goes prospecting with an axe, hunting for hack or back juniper or tamarack. When one is found he looks to see if it has the proper crook in its root. If the right angle is there and the root proves sound he sets to work digging it out—and it is a muscle racking job.

The man who is after hemlock bark for the tanneries is another chap who strays far in the woods, for the bark is away back nowadays.

The Indian who hunts after basket stuff or birch bark for a canoe hull is the most patient searcher. The big birches are few and far between in the Maine woods, and sometimes an Indian from the Penobscot or Passamaquoddy tribe will tramp a hundred miles before he finds a tree that will yield a piece of bark without knothole or crack and which will be large enough for a canoe.

A number of men are now making good money in the Maine woods by searching the brooks for fresh water clams. They are getting some good pearls from these bivalves. Some hunters in the Moosehead region recently found a pearl valued at \$200.

The most unsocial folk in the Maine forests are the trappers. They don't want anyone within twenty miles of them. Gunners will steal from the traps, they believe, and lumbermen scare away game. Even bobcats rob them, as bloody smears near a rifled trap indicate.

Some of the old trappers have a twenty-mile circuit of traps and resent it if any neighbors come that way. Some of the biggest rough and tumbles that the Maine beavers have ever witnessed have been fought out by bow-legged old trappers who have chanced to cross trails and have believed that they were being crowded on a hundred square miles of territory.

MISSOURI WILLOW FARM.

East Kansas City is one of the most important centres in the Missouri Valley in the business of shipping willows. In the last three months alone the Kansas City Southern Railway has hauled from there 140 flat carloads of trimmed willows, and is taking out more as fast as the willow plantations can furnish the crop.

The roots of the willows keep the sand from shifting along the river banks; but the use of the tops of willows in fighting currents of water is comparatively new. Government work with willows requires that the trees shall be more than twelve feet high and between 3/4 and 2-1/2 inches in diameter at the butts. After a patch of these trees has been cut the ground looks like a stubblefield of corn. The new sprouts, however, look more like a field of wheat—if wheat only had that peculiar reddish tinge that willows take on at this time of the year. In two and a half to three years after cutting willows will grow up again to the size required for dikes or for plaiting into mats.

The willows now being bought by the railway are for use in checking the inroads of the Arkansas River between Spiro and Fort Smith, Ark. The dikes that are being constructed run out into the river 150 feet and are of willows held in place with large steel cables. Since December 11 nearly 800 carloads of trees—not all of these willows—have been dumped into the river.

The sand filling the crevices between the bundles of willows makes a strong and economical pier. The steel cables insure the safety of the pier until the sand has done its work.

In cutting and trimming the willows the harvesters use nothing but ordinary corn knives.

ANIMALS THAT DREAD RAIN.

Lions, tigers, and all the cat tribe dread rain. On a rainy day they tear nervously up and down their cages, growling and trembling. The keepers usually give them an extra ration of hot milk. That puts them to sleep.

Wolves love a gray day of rain. They are then very cheery. Treacherous as the wolf is, no keeper need fear him on a rainy day. He is too happy to harm a fly.

Snakes, too, like rain. They perk up wonderfully as the barometer falls and the damp makes itself felt in their warm cases of glass.

Rain makes monkeys glum. They are apt from instinct, when they see it through the window, to clasp their hands above their heads and sit so for hours. That attitude, you know, makes a kind of shelter. It is the primitive umbrella. So, when it rained, the naked primitive man and woman sat gloomily in the primeval swamps of giant ferns.

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Transcriber's Note:

Added table of contents.

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Page 4, removed unnecessary apostrophe from "let's" in "That lets the dago out."

Page 12, changed "Ruffin" to "Ruffian" for consistency with previous volumes.

Page 21, corrected speaker from Carl to Matt in first sentence of chapter XIII.

Page 30, changed "jobbs" to "jobs" ("lumbermen at odd jobs").

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